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REVELATION AND THE HOLY SPIRIT



REVELATION AND THE HOLY SPIRIT

AN ESSAY IN BARTHIAN THEOLOGY

BY

F. W. CAMFIELD, M.A., D.D.

“

WITH A FOREWORD

BY

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FOREWORD

By REV. JOHN MCCONNACHIE, M.A., D.D.

It affords me the utmost pleasure to write a Foreword to this book by my friend Dr. F. W. Camfield on *Revelation and the Holy Spirit*. I have never met Dr. Camfield in the flesh, but for several years I have communed with him in mind and spirit in a common interest in the Barthian Theology. It was an article of mine in the *Hibbert Journal* some six years ago, he informed me, which first made him aware of this new movement, and he set himself to acquire a knowledge of German in order that he might read Barth in the original. As a former student of that Barthian before Barth—Dr. P. T. Forsyth—he was already more than half prepared, and he made rapid progress. This book will reveal to the world, what I have known for several years, that Dr. Camfield possesses one of the acutest minds which are at present engaged with this theology, and he has a real contribution to make, particularly regarding the doctrine of Revelation.

I read this book in its original form as a thesis for the D.D. of London University, and was deeply impressed by its intellectual power, and grasp of the principles of Barthianism. I urged its publication then, and I am glad that it is now to appear. I gladly take also this opportunity of acknowledging some use which I made

of the thesis in my recent book, which in the nature of the case I could not acknowledge.

As this is the only theology which, in my opinion, is taking seriously at the present moment the rethinking of the doctrine of Revelation, I would bespeak for this able and scholarly volume a warm welcome from the whole Church.

JOHN McCONNACHIE.

PREFACE

THE aim of the following essay is to think through again the Christian idea of revelation, and to do it from the standpoint of the New Testament conception of the Holy Spirit. The thesis which I attempt to expound and develop is, that in this conception a category is supplied whereby the meaning and implications of revelation as Christianity understands that term may be discovered and brought out. Revelation brings its own category of interpretation. It shines in its own light. It is seen in and through itself. It is not just a collection of ideas and disclosures which, in order to be seen as revelation, have first rationally to be correlated with the forms of categories of man's natural reason. That would make a rational principle the real 'locale' of revelation. But revelation, inasmuch as it is essentially dynamic and creative, brings with it the principle of its own interpretation. What that means and whereto it leads, it is hoped the following pages will make clear.

CHAPTER I

THE IDEA OF REVELATION

THERE is perhaps no greater need to-day for religion than that of a fresh examination of the idea of revelation. This is necessary not only in the interests of Christian theology but also of the whole range of man's thought on the final problems of life and the universe. What do we mean, or rather, what ought we to mean, when we speak of revelation? The word is commonly used with a bewildering variety of connotation. We speak of the revelations of science, of poetry and art, of human nature, society, life and love, and so on. The word revelation is stretched to cover all the discoveries, inventions, perceptions and intuitions which enlarge and extend our experience. Religion itself is made parallel with these perceptions and discoveries of the human mind and spirit, and it is often defended as a method of approach to reality equally vivid with others. In Canon Streeter's fine book *Reality*, for instance, religion is, as it were, laid alongside of science and art, as having, at the lowest, an equal right with these in the interpretation of the mystery of the universe.

The attempt is accordingly made to 'reconcile' religion with these other activities of man's mind and spirit. We have, as it were, a mass of positive contributions to the understanding of reality which must find a way of living together in the same house; a number of different lines of approach which must somehow be made to converge on the same point. The scientist has his contribution, the artist his, and the religious man his. The difficulty of adjusting and reconciling these positive contributions, these different

lines of approach is acutely felt. The relation between science and religion, which perhaps bulks most in the mind of the modern man who is interested in and concerned for both, is, in spite of all the praiseworthy and not wholly unsuccessful attempts which have been made of late to 'reconcile' them, that of a painful tension; and this tension only seems to weaken when the scientist begins to lose confidence in himself, and when the religious man forswears all dogmatism and contents himself with a vague mysticism—when, that is, he surrenders the idea of a positive word addressed to him and accepts the position of a mere seeker after truth. And though the tension between religion and art is perhaps less relevant in this connection, it is in truth scarcely less striking, especially in our own day. And it is not easy to see how the difficulties caused by these tensions can ever be overcome while the various activities of man's mind and spirit, science, art, religion, and the like are regarded, each as a positive and valid method equally with the others, for the interpretation of reality.

The truth is, our difficulties to-day arise from the fact that the freedom, independence, autonomy of the mental life of man in every direction of its activity is accepted almost universally, and in the most unqualified way. The idea of autonomy as applied to the sciences and to all the fields of man's mental activity is taken as pre-supposition. That the mental worker should be guided in his conclusions by anything other than the subject-matter of his investigations and the methods appropriate thereto, that he should be interfered with, in any sense, by any outside considerations, that, for example, religious or theological considerations should be permitted to lift up their heads in the field of scientific

conclusion, this is regarded as intolerable. If there be such a thing as universally accepted dogma, it is this idea of the autonomy of the sciences.

We are well aware, of course, how modern the dogma is. In the Middle Ages it would have been regarded as the supreme heresy. The Church was not indisposed to grant even a wide measure of freedom to the mental worker, so long as it was clearly recognised that theology had the last word. Theology was the "Queen of the Sciences" and she was no constitutional but an absolute monarch. Every branch of man's mental life was brought into subjection to theology. St. Thomas Aquinas could produce a 'Summa' which should be a compendium of the whole mass of human knowledge on the mysteries of the universe, because he was able to take this supremacy of theology over every direction of man's mental life for granted. That the sciences were not autonomous, that they had no independent rights, that they must take their bearings from theological truth, and have their conclusions adjusted to that truth, this was regarded as inevitable, necessary and right. It is easy to cry out against this tyranny, to charge the Mediæval Church with blindness and obscurantism; and, of course, the situation could not last. Conflict, tension and even disruption were bound to appear. But it was not mere tyranny or obscurantism which denied autonomy to the various departments of man's mental life. The Church felt instinctively that her claim to be in possession of revealed truth was imperilled and even denied, if the pre-supposition of autonomy, namely that truth is an open question, that it is still to be sought, were granted.

The connection between revealed truth and the activities and conclusions of man's reason was declared

to consist in the fact that the former was completely congruous with the latter, that it was but the extension of rational knowledge, that it was built upon a sub-structure of rationally ascertainable and verifiable truth which it simply completed. But in making that claim, theology granted to reason, in principle, the very autonomy which it denied to it in fact. If theology appeals to reason, then by reason must it stand. It cannot at one and the same time dominate reason, set limits to reason, and accept the verdict of reason, wait upon the conclusions of reason. This consideration was, however, countered by the assertion that reason has been thwarted and perverted by man's sin, and that therefore it must submit itself to the domination of revelation, in the doing of which it would find itself renewed and strengthened. The result of this conclusion was that a new significance came to be attached to dogma as the expression of revelation on its intellectual side. Dogma came to be considered as a form of law. Man's reason must accept a limit, a law imposed from without. The Church was interpreted as a great system of society and government, the spiritual counterpart of secular society, parallel with it in its nature, and embracing by divine right the whole body of humanity. Of this divine society each man was a subject, and the whole of his life, including his intellect, was subordinate to its government. The conception of law entered into that of dogma. Dogma was the Church's law for man's mind. The result was, that a certain spirit of expediency crept into the idea of divine truth. There were times when divine truth was regarded less in its quality of truth than in its quality of law, which it was expedient to maintain in the interests of the organisation of human life in the Church. This new significance can clearly be seen in the

attitude of the Church to heresy. Heresy was treason against the sanctity of divine government as well as, and sometimes rather than, falsity; and as treason it could appropriately be punished. In all this, it becomes apparent that what was lacking, and indeed it is still largely lacking, was any thorough-going examination of the relation of revelation to the autonomy of man's reason. A kind of compromise between the two was set up by giving to dogma the aspect of law, and this compromise worked on the whole fairly successfully, while there was little or nothing in man's mental life to offer serious challenge to the conclusions of theology.

But, as we have said, this situation could not last. At the Renaissance reason largely secured its autonomy as over against the domination of the Church. Science, art, scholarship began to claim for themselves independence. No longer were they willing to accept direction and to have their conclusions forestalled in the interests of theology. The unity of man's mind in relation to the last truth of things began to break up. Each separate department of thought claimed to go on its own way unimpeded, and to approach the problem of truth from its own particular angle.

Now the result of this, in many ways, very right and necessary liberation, was that religion and theology lost not only sovereignty, but even autonomy for themselves. The ironic circumstance has rarely been remarked, that it was considered a great achievement on the part of Schleiermacher, that he should have succeeded in establishing the autonomy of religion. Religion came to be looked upon as a branch of philosophy, or ethics. It was felt to possess no independent right or place of its own. Religion was the true philosophy or it was the indispensable sanction of ethic. It must appeal to

philosophy or to ethic, to substantiate its claim. It could not, as it were, stand on its own foundation, it must stand on a foundation laid for it by metaphysics or ethic. The "The Queen of the Sciences" found herself to be their handmaid, looking to them for the right to lift up her head in the house of man's mental life.

And this position religion still retains in the thought of many. In Hegelianism religion is just the crude adumbration of that which reaches its perfection in philosophy. It is just crude philosophical intuition. The New-Idealists, such as Croce and Gentile, interpret it after this fashion. Its autonomy is conceded in a sense, but only as raw material for philosophical truth. No true-ness is granted to it as such, only the possibility of attaining true-ness through philosophical criticism and speculation. From another point of view religion is regarded as a derivative of ethic. Ethic postulates religion after the manner of Kant. The practical reason as distinct from the theoretical reason leads out to the great affirmations of religion. Ritschlianism though deriving much from Schleiermacher is, to a large extent, constructed upon the foundation of the philosophy of Kant. Its idea of 'beruf' or calling, is a moralistic one. Its conception of the kingdom of God as a realm of moral ends, together with its renunciation of metaphysics and its system of value-judgments, means that religion is taken as the supreme moral valuation of life. From ethics it derives its validity and its right. On ethics it stands. By ethical reflection must it be interpreted and evaluated.

Schleiermacher, as we have said, was the first great pioneer of the autonomy of religion. In that respect he may be called "the Father of Modern Theology." According to him, religion was no derivative of

philosophy or ethics but an original, independent, underived datum. Its essence was pure feeling, the feeling of absolute dependence. It was the primal reaction set up in the soul of man, antecedent to all reflection and to all action, by the universe around him; an inevitable, *a priori* feeling of absolute dependence. An original God-consciousness belongs to the very nature of man. In the sense that he is absolutely dependent, man becomes inevitably conscious of God. It is not relevant to our purpose to discuss Schleiermacher's method of establishing the God-consciousness through this original, given, feeling of absolute dependence. He has not been widely followed in this respect. But he did succeed in drawing attention to the autonomy of religion, in delivering it from its subjection to philosophy and ethics, and in establishing its right to a place of its own in the mental life of man. His followers have given themselves to the task of establishing this autonomy on a more satisfactory basis. Indeed it is scarcely an exaggeration to say that the whole effort of modern theology has been towards the making valid of the autonomy of religion, and to the drawing out of its implications. Troeltsch, for example, has discovered in man's reason a transcendent element which is met by the presence of the transcendent in the universe. According to him, the essence of religion is not feeling, but intuitive reason. The transcendent element in reason guarantees the autonomy of religion. Otto in his much discussed book *Das Heilige* (The Holy) carries the discussion a stage further. He too finds a religious *a priori* in the soul of man, but interprets it as an original, underived apprehension of what he calls 'the numinous', that which awakens awe; a feeling which is unique and which persists and is intensified and at the same time refined

through all reflection and rationalisation. Through the efforts of these and other workers the autonomy of religion has secured wide recognition. It is still, of course, widely attacked, and the New Psychology has brought fresh weapons of offence. But it still remains as a powerful instrument of apologetic. And this autonomy of religion is generally looked upon as the fundamental principle of revelation. If revelation is to be spoken of, it is thought that the autonomy of religion must be the all-determining idea. So we have a number of autonomous activities of man's mind, of which religion is one, perhaps the chief. In the mutual action and interaction of these activities in their concurrent approach to the problem of the universe, is truth to be discovered. Religion takes its place with a contribution of its own to make, a contribution which may not be ignored or misprized.

But religion and supremely Christianity have never been comfortable in this position. To be regarded as standing with other and parallel activities of man's mind and spirit, and moving with them to the supreme object of their common quest—this, religion has ever felt to be fatal in the long run to its existence as revelation. The question arises, can it remain as a 'positive' in this position? Can it hope to be, in the end, more than a certain spirit, attitude, temper, influencing and colouring all these other activities? Can it establish itself as truth in any definite or positive sense? Must it not forswear the idea of revelation? Is not the last word after all left to science which does lead to definite and positive conclusions? Must not religion be relegated to the position of a mere mental and spiritual attitude, which yet allows science to be supreme in the realm of statement or conclusion? Something like this seems to be the view

of Kirsopp Lake in his book, *The Religion of Yesterday and To-morrow*. A place is certainly left for religion in this book, but throughout, the final and decisive word about the nature of life and even about the being of God is left to science. And Julian Huxley's thesis of "Religion without Revelation" would appear to indicate the final direction in which this conception of religion is moving.

Now religion and especially Christianity have ever felt themselves to be definitely and positively truth or nothing at all. In distinction to all mere feeling or experience, all mere tone, temper and attitude of mind and spirit, Christianity at any rate proclaims itself as word, and as last word, that is to say as revelation. It claims to be something which is to be *believed*. It envisages not an approach to the problem of life parallel with other approaches, but a subversion of the whole idea of human approach as such. That is to say, it places in the foreground not an approach of man to reality, but an approach of reality to man. It conceives of reality not as the object of man's investigation but as the subject of man's life. While in science and philosophy man starts out from his experience, and by examining and clarifying it, seeks to discover reality, here reality takes the initiative and treats man and his experience as its objects. In other words Christianity sets out from the idea of grace; not from an *a priori* within the soul, in the sense of something positive within the nature of man which meets with something positive outside of him, but from a negative in man's life, indeed from man's life regarded as a negative, a negative which is met by grace. God moves towards man, man does not move towards God. All comes from grace, begins in grace, and ends in grace. Man is sought and found, he does not seek and find.

If then we are to speak to any purpose of revelation, it is this idea which we must first examine. It darkens counsel and introduces confusion to use the word revelation to cover man's general and many-sided approach to reality in the investigating and clarifying of his experience, until we have either accepted or rejected this claim which Christianity in especial makes. It is necessary, at any rate provisionally, to put revelation in a category of its own. We are concerned with a movement from God to man and not from man to God. We have to develop the idea of God not from below upwards but from above downwards. We have to do, not with man reaching God, but with God reaching man. Our concern is with no evolutionary process discernible in the world, but with a revolutionary act on the world.

.

The mind will be prepared for the sympathetic entertaining of this idea by a multitude of considerations. Too much stress may doubtless be laid on the deep and continually recurring sense of need for revelation in this sense. Dean Inge criticises with asperity but not without justice, the implications of the phrase, "A gospel for human needs."¹ To point to a feeling of need is not to say that that need will be satisfied. Religion which is based on human needs, or which makes these needs the criteria of truth is certainly open to the charge of subjectivism. When men make the longings and desires which rise in them from their felt sense of need the standards of their beliefs, the way is opened to a debased pragmatism which can justify all kinds of error and superstition. But the need which cries out for revelation

¹ See *Outspoken Essays*, p. 267.

lies deeper than any mere desire craving for fulfilment. It is in its deepest significance a longing to burst through all the bonds of subjectivity. In other words the need which postulates revelation is an *a priori* sense of negativity. It is not simply that there is an *a priori* in the soul of man, in the sense of a positive apprehension of the religious object as continuous with his life, it is that there is an *a priori* of a negative kind. Man does not feel in the depths of his being that he has got God, but that he hasn't got Him, that he is somehow alienated and cut off, that he is in his empiric actuality, a negative, a need, an emptiness as over against God. It is to establish bonds of union and communion with the Deity, to set up a relation, to bring himself and God really together, that he betakes himself to religion.

Men crave not merely for an extension of their powers and possibilities, but for the invasion of these by wholly other powers and possibilities. They have ever felt, dimly or clearly, the utter inadequacy of their natural powers, even the highest and finest, before the vast mysteries and the giant antagonisms of life. The longing of men for something beyond and other than those discoveries, perceptions, and intuitions, which lead them to envisage reality as a mere object of thought and activity, their continually recurring conviction that reality cannot primarily be object but must be thought of first and foremost as subject, their craving for an authority before which they can bow, rather than a datum which they can investigate—all this is striking fact which cannot be without deep significance.

But the need for revelation takes on a deeper meaning still, when it is borne in mind that life calls upon men, not merely to investigate experience, but above all to

master it. Life brings with it experiences of the most diverse kinds. Every day of our lives we pass through many and disconnected experiences, and we are constantly striving to synthesize and master them. They cannot be made available for the interpretation of life unless they are not only classified and examined by reflection, but brought into some kind of subjection to the experiencing subject. Life proceeds through the mastery of experience. Where experience is not in some measure brought under control, it leads to the complete disintegration of life and mind. And it may be argued¹ that the function of poetry and art is not to extend the borders of our knowledge, but to enable us to master our experience. In all genuine artistic expression, different elements of our experience are brought together in such a way that the mind can, as it were, rise above them. We attain a kind of salvation. Our experiences are fused together in a new element. Poetry, art, music and the like bring to our experiences something which in themselves they do not possess. They are an answer to a life need, which is no mere subjective desire or longing but an ineradicable necessity of our nature.

And yet they are no real answer. They seem to be an answer only because they give moving and sometimes satisfying expression to a need. They are not revelation ; only a mode of self-expression. Nothing is said to our need, no answer is given to our question, but the need is for the moment adequately expressed, the question is set out in something like the true scope of its implications. When Wordsworth says :

To me alone there came a thought of grief,
A timely utterance gave that thought relief,
And I again am strong,

¹ I recall a lecture by Drinkwater.

he is indicating, in an almost perfect way, the function of poetry and art. The need is truly and deeply expressed. Man is delighted to find that there is something more to be said about the facts and experiences of life than simply 'there they are.' He is delighted to discover that he can do more than point to their stark actuality. He can so bring that actuality into relation with the deep life-forces of his own being, that these forces receive expression and a kind of quickening. The very facts that threaten life can be so orientated as it were towards life, that thereby life is enhanced and enriched. Death for example, the great enemy, can be set forth in such terms of sublimity, majesty and beauty, that it becomes no mere fact which can only be indicated, but a vast significance, creating within the soul new emotions, new life-stirrings and life-quickening. But all the time, what is happening is that man's deep need is receiving an expression, which for the time calms the mind and satisfies the spirit. It is a case of self-expression not of revelation, of the question being put, not of the question being answered. Experience is not really mastered, it is only deeply expressed. That this is so, is evident in the case of one deep experience of human life—we may perhaps anticipate so far as to call it the fundamental experience of human life—the sense of sin and guilt. Even here artistic expression is not valueless. Aristotle spoke of poetic tragedy as having its supreme value in the purgation of the emotions through terror. The Greek theatre, which largely occupied itself with the tragedy of guilt, aimed at the purifying of the human soul, and so became a kind of pulpit. And yet, that poetry and art are totally inadequate to deal with the experience of sin and guilt it would be superfluous to argue. The tragedy of *Cædipus* closes in darkness and the night. In

poetry and art the experience of guilt is not mastered, no word of forgiveness relieves its tragedy, nothing is said to it, it simply expresses itself. The gods remain wrathful, and dark fate works itself out into its last inexorable conclusion.

Nevertheless, poetry and art have much to teach us in regard to the idea of revelation. They are useful in promoting the insight that the only answer to the question put by human life is to be found, if at all, in the question itself. That is to say, sin itself must somehow be made to speak of forgiveness, death must be made to speak of new life. Unless the very experience of sin can be made to speak of something beyond itself, unless death can so come home to our consciousness that it has something really to say, revelation is out of the question. The poet and the artist will speak of our human lot of death in such a way as to create new life-quickening within the soul. In their inspiration death is no mere stark object, it does something. In a sense we may say it is no dumb thing, it speaks. If only it could say something new to experience, instead of merely giving expression to what experience says of it! If only it could be made to speak of something beyond itself!

This, however, it cannot do. It does not speak of revelation, it merely indicates how it would like to speak of it. But in pointing to the need for revelation, in indicating what revelation must be if it is to be revelation at all, it performs an invaluable service. Somehow life must come and lay hold of death, that the very idea of death may enter into consciousness in a new way; holiness and righteousness must come into sin, that the sense of sin may be in consciousness the conviction of forgiveness and redemption, if real revelation is to take place. There must be, not simply a going forth of

experience in full activity and expression, but a coming down into experience.

But a further and most important consideration which will dispose the mind sympathetically to entertain the idea of revelation, lies in the fundamentally negative nature of the results gained by man's own approaches to reality. Nothing is more pathetic than the apparently invincible confidence in science, for example, which still obtains in the popular mind. We have no desire to under-rate the immense service rendered to human life by science. ¹Professor Whitehead truly observes: "The great conquerors from Alexander to Cæsar and from Cæsar to Napoleon, influenced profoundly the lives of subsequent generations. But the total effect of this influence shrinks to insignificance if compared to the entire transformation of human habits and human mentality produced by the long line of men of thought from Thales to the present day, men individually powerless, but ultimately the rulers of the world." But the fact remains that science but enlarges the problem of the universe, it does not bring it nearer solution. As Bernard Shaw has truly observed, science never solves one problem, without bringing to light ten new ones. To give one definite instance, will anyone deny that the enormous advance in astronomical knowledge has magnified the problem of the universe to dimensions hitherto unrealised? When the hero of Hardy's *Two on a Tower* confesses himself appalled by the sight of the vast inter-stellar spaces through his telescope, when his astronomical knowledge inflicts upon his mind the sense of a terrible chaotic purposelessness, bringing home to him a problem before which his mind sinks back in powerlessness and indeed in fear, is he not thereby

¹ *Science and the Modern World*, p. 259.

avowing the essential negativity of the results of science for the purpose of revelation? Will anyone in cold blood, with the results of scientific investigation before him, and with the long course of philosophical reflection through the ages added thereto, claim that we are in reality one whit nearer to any final word upon the mystery of the universe? Surely if science has any positive function in this regard, it is to bring it home to us that our wisdom consists in an ever clearer realisation of our ignorance; that by means of it our question is emphasized and enlarged rather than answered. We are well aware that in so speaking we open ourselves to the charge of philosophical scepticism, but the throwing about of names and reproaches will not avail, while the facts remain so clear. But the charge of philosophical scepticism is not one to be taken seriously. Our knowledge is made none the less real and valuable within its own proper sphere by emphasizing and bringing out into clear view its own limits. If we advance from what Schweitzer has called 'simple ignorance' to 'complicated ignorance' we have none the less really advanced. Dr. Forsyth has pointed out that an important element in grasping the solution of a problem, is to see how big the problem is. And the solution when grasped reveals and establishes the value of those contributions which set out the problem in its true dimensions.

We shall see, when we come to discuss in a later chapter the relation of revelation to reason, that the positive discoveries and conclusions of science and philosophy are not simply set aside, they are on the contrary re-established in a new if relative way. Nevertheless history alone will point to the conclusion that they cannot reach any final and decisive word in regard to the mystery of the universe. Schweitzer has observed that

¹“since the time when man attained the conditions precedent to such an apprehension and judgment of things as we might call in our sense a *Weltanschauung*—that is, since the individual learned to take into consideration the totality of being, the world as a whole, and to reflect as a knowing and willing subject upon the reciprocal relations of a passive and active sort which subsist between himself and the All—no far-reaching development has really occurred in the spiritual life of humanity. The problems of the Greeks turn up again in the most modern philosophy. The scepticism of to-day is essentially the same as that which came to expression in ancient thought.” ²And Brunner, in speaking of metaphysics, has pointed out that “in every period when metaphysics is alive, it is alive in every one of its different types.” But if this be true, and it is surely undeniable, if man’s positive approaches to ultimate truth and reality, whatever they discover on the way, but emphasize at last his own essential negativity and ignorance, and if this quest for final truth is one which man cannot abandon so long as he remains man, how is it that we are not more ready to consider the possibility of a totally different kind of approach, that of reality to man? Science itself when it arrives at a true understanding of itself, must raise the question of revelation.

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And now to come directly to the subject of our presentation, it is clear that we should have no ground for entertaining the idea of revelation, in the sense in which we have been speaking of it, were it not for the fact

¹ *The Mystery of the Kingdom of God*; Introduction, pp. 47-48.

² *The Word and the World*, p. 15.

that witness has been borne that such revelation has been given. Here lies an arresting fact which stands across the pathway of man's search after reality : definite, earnest, challenging witness confronts us, that revelation has been given. Our first task then is to examine the witness. It will seem a huge and unwarrantable *petitio principii* to assert that this witness is given only in the New Testament. This contention will be attacked from many sides, and specially from the side of Comparative Religion. Why, it will be said, limit revelation to Christianity and especially to the writings collected together under the title of *The New Testament* ? The late Baron von Hügel was always insistent in maintaining that it is possible to speak of Christianity as revelation, only if revelation be allowed to the other great religions of the world as well ; only if prevenient, approaches of reality to man, be granted in these. This, of course, may be at once conceded in general terms. But the idea which seems to underlie this contention may not forthwith be allowed to pass. Is it meant that we must make a sort of preliminary framework of the content of revelation into which these different religions must somehow be made to fit ? Can we make no evaluation of the witness which is immediately to our hand in the New Testament, excepting under conditions prescribed by the general religious history of mankind ? Supposing, as a matter of fact, we found in our witness something which disqualified every other kind of witness as such, are we to reject it on this ground out of hand ? This would be to work *a priori*, to begin with ideas philosophical or religious, instead of with the facts, with the witness. Surely the right method for the Christian believer is to begin quite definitely and even exclusively with the kind of witness which he finds immediately to

his hand. He must ask himself what is the nature of the witness? Does it really speak of revelation? Let the adherent of some other religion do the same from his standpoint. The question is not, what are the religious ideas that appear from an examination and comparison of the various religious systems, and can we combine these by means of some *a priori* idea of what constitutes revelation? The question is rather what is said to have happened? Is revelation really spoken of? Have we any word of a real approach of reality to man? And the more this method is kept in mind, the clearer does it become, that such a word is never definitely and positively articulated save in Christianity, save in the New Testament. For there, everything turns on a real happening, a real coming of reality to man which as Emil Brunner has pointed out has the character of a 'once-for-all' happening.¹ In pagan religions the events which are witnessed to, have the character of mythological events in that they are by their very nature repeatable. The incarnations, avatars, etc., of pagan religion have nothing about them which prevents them from being repeated at will. They are objectivations of nature processes, or speculative ideas. They can happen again and again. There is no real, all-decisive coming of reality to man, nothing that brings all life to a decisive point, nothing that absolutely determines the course of existence. They do not mark a new method of approach between man and reality, a method which disqualifies in this relation the ordinary approaches from man's side to reality. They are valuable in supporting that autonomy of religion of which we have spoken, in bearing witness to the essential independence and creativeness of the religious spirit in man, but they can help us little if we put revelation into

¹ See Brunner, *Der Mittler*, chapter I, *et passim*.

a category of its own, which provisionally, at any rate, we propose to do. At anyrate we do find a very definitely articulated word of revelation in the New Testament. Whether that word can substantiate itself or no, is not here the question. But we may interrogate that word, we may examine that witness, without raising at the beginning the question whether such a word is found elsewhere.

One other objection may be glanced at in passing. It is sometimes said from within Christianity itself, that attention cannot be confined to the pages of the New Testament but that regard must also be given to the traditions of the Catholic Church. There is that in Christianity, it is said, belonging to the subject-matter of revelation, which is not found expressly in the New Testament. The New Testament cannot be isolated from the whole body of the tradition of the Church, cannot be considered independently and in itself. This objection, however, whatever weight it may have in itself, is not serious for our purposes. For the Church has ever taken its stand on the position that there is revelation in the New Testament. It has founded itself on the New Testament witness. Whether anything but what is definitely contained in the New Testament can be allowed to pass as revelation, can only be determined when the nature of the New Testament witness has been determined.

But what do we mean when we speak of examining the witness? The examination which we have in view can scarcely be that of rational criticism. Rational criticism can deal with alleged historical facts and with the evolution of religious ideas, but it cannot deal with any element in these which is real revelation. In rational criticism, the subject-object relation remains unchanged ;

the reason approaches an object. The reason finds itself confronted with what claims to be truth, but the truth, while it may indeed be truth, can never become revelation until the reason has worked on it, and embraced it. It is in being worked on by the reason, that truth becomes revelation according to rational criticism. That is to say what makes truth revelation is some activity on man's part. But this destroys the idea of revelation as an approach of reality to man, a real coming of God into the field of man's consciousness. Here the subject-object relation is transcended. Here it is impossible to deal with revelation from the standpoint of pure objectivity. Here consciousness itself is acted upon, invaded, attacked, organised in a new way. Here man's being is brought to a point of decision and crisis. Here reason in its old connotation falls away, for reason can only contemplate an object, approach an object. Here the knowledge is not knowledge of an object, but knowledge of being known by a subject. The correlation of revelation with reason is something effected by revelation itself. Its principle is not some immanent principle of reason, but a transcendent principle which revelation itself brings. The criteria of revelation will appear not in any rational, objective examinations which we make of it, but in those examinations which it makes of us. We shall deal with this point at greater length when we come to examine the nature of faith. Here it will be sufficient to point out that an examination of the witness will consist in no rational criticism as such, but in an attempt to discover whether or no the character of revelation is sustained throughout; whether, that is, the speech is coherently and consistently that of an approach of reality to man and not that of man to reality, and whether the specific ideas that arise as the subject-matter of revelation, are ideas

which are germane to man's being known by a subject rather than to his knowing of an object. Such an examination will be, in itself, open ears for revelation proper. It is obvious that revelation in this sense can never be proved, for directly we speak of proof we step down again to the subject-object relation. But it can be heard. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans x, 17).

Now we cannot approach the New Testament without at once perceiving that it does speak decisively of revelation in this sense. Whether it speaks coherently or convincingly is not now the question. But testimony is very definitely borne to the fact that there has been such revelation. Not only have we the witness of certain deeds and events which are declared to be of God, but these have a character which is all their own. They are historical in the sense that they witness to the fact that something of prime importance has really happened, but they are not historical in the usual sense, for what has happened cannot be apprehended by historical knowledge as such, but only by a new faculty, a new organisation of consciousness itself which is called faith. They are subject to an interpretation which does not lie in their mere historical character. They form the material for a great 'word' in which all their value lies, but which is not deducible from their nature as mere historical events. They are given an 'eschatological' significance, that is to say, they have the character of all-decisiveness and once-for-allness. They are not events which are, as it were, interpolated into the general course of history, so that a recurrence of them becomes a possibility. Their whole nature precludes recurrence. They gather history to a crisis, proclaim its end, merely as history. If they belong to mythology, the mythology is very different

from that which generally passes under that name. And they are authenticated, not by any rational validation, but by a transcendent element which is spoken of as the Holy Spirit. We have not only a new event, we have also a new consciousness in which the new event loses its character of mere historicity and becomes spiritual reality. And this happens in no rational-casual way, as if the event in its character of history produced the consciousness which embraces it, so that this consciousness is mere result and sequence of the event ; it happens in a purely transcendent way, in and through the operation of the Holy Spirit upon the mind and consciousness of man. The word of this revelation discloses not a continuity between man and reality which would make revelation at the last unnecessary, but a vast discontinuity, upon which it bears down with all its weight. And in so doing, it opens up for the first time, the possibility of a thorough-going mastery of experience. This discontinuity, it declares, covers all life, even the life of thought and reason, making thereby man's approach to reality a fundamental impossibility and disclosing the radical necessity of an approach of reality to man. A thorough-going criticism and judgment is proposed of the whole range of man's life, a criticism and judgment indicated by terms as fundamental as ' death ' and ' resurrection '. A new knowledge issuing from this criticism and judgment comes to take command of man's mind, so that " he that is spiritual (that is the recipient of the divine transcendent Spirit) judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man " (1 Cor. ii, 15). Everywhere the connecting links between man and God are declared to be not in man's empirical nature as such, but in God alone, so that the empirical man is as such disqualified, and his reconciliation with God becomes an act of new creation.

"If any man be in Christ he is a new creature (there is a new creation, R.V. margin—2 Cor. v, 17). A complete and thorough-going aggression on empirical man is here proposed, an aggression which would be intolerable and absurd from any merely rational point of view, but which takes on a new semblance of validity and reasonableness if a real approach of reality to man fall within the realm of possibility. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God ; for they are foolishness unto him" (1 Cor. ii, 14). It must surely be clear that in all this we have a very fruitful field of investigation. The investigation is likely to lead to surprising results, results moreover which will give grave offence to the 'natural man.' Of this, however, we are fully forewarned : "Unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness" (1 Cor. i, 23). But it may possibly be, that the whole range of man's thought and knowledge will be seen in a new light, which, while calling it in question, will yet give it a firmer validation. The thinker is under no *a priori* obligation to accept this 'revelation' ; it is scarcely wisdom, however, on his part simply to pass it by.

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There are, however, certain difficulties and objections which are felt by many to be so strong as to deter them from proceeding energetically with this line of enquiry. They feel that, be the witness what it may, if revelation be not directly correlated with the rest of our knowledge and experience, we fall at last into sheer irrationality and dogmatism. They feel that the witness must not only be examined and clarified but that it must be interpreted. And by interpretation they mean, translated

into those categories and thought-forms which we utilise in the rest of our knowledge. Thus they feel that the idea of an approach of reality to man which disqualifies as such all approaches of man to reality for the purposes of revelation, cannot be entertained, however strong the witness to its reality may be. It will be our endeavour to deal with these difficulties and objections as we proceed in our enquiry. But a few words about the most outstanding of them would seem to be called for here and now.

First, it is said, no witness however strong could be acceptable which pointed to a pure transcendence of God, and set aside that conviction of His immanence which is so powerful to-day in religious thinking. It may be pointed out, however, that the question has to do not with the fact of the divine immanence but with its nature. It will hardly be contended that there is no problem here; that the truth of the divine immanence is so clear and devoid of complications, that it can forthwith be laid hold of, and made a category for the interpretation of revelation. Let it be granted that in all our experience there are trans-subjective elements and in all our knowledge trans-human references which point to the supernatural, it does not follow that an examination of these undertaken in any philosophic way will yield us anything that deserves to be called revelation, or put into our hands the key for the interpretation of what presents itself to us as revelation. The question is what has revelation to say to these trans-subjective elements in our knowledge and experience? In other words, the question is what is the nature of that immanence which we are disposed to think we understand so clearly? Certainly, if God were not in some way immanent in the world, it would be impossible to speak of revelation at all;

indeed, it would be impossible to speak of God at all. God would be a being between Whom and the world there were no connections, that is, He would not be God ; for the very idea of God and supremely of a revealing God implies connections with the world of the closest kind. Indeed it implies that these connections are the fundamental ground and reality of the world's life. But the question arises, are we to think of the divine immanence as a principle which forthwith validates the evolution of thought and experience, or are we to think of it as constantly bringing this evolution to a point of criticism and new departure. If the latter, it will be evident that we are in no position to estimate the nature of immanence until we have had a revelation from the transcendent. The approach of reality to the world will light up the workings of reality in the world. But we shall make a big mistake if we commence with these latter, assume that we know them, and on the basis of our assumed knowledge proceed to criticise what presents itself to us as revelation. In any case, examination of the witness should not be debarred or rendered futile at the beginning by any *a priori* assumptions on our part with regard to the nature of immanence. Certainly if upon our examination we discover that the witness leaves no room for immanence at all, if we are presented with a pure transcendence and an absolute dualism of God and the world, if God be presented simply as a "divine invader," to quote Canon Raven's term, the witness will fall to the ground. But it may be that the problem of immanence will be illumined for us. The present writer recalls a dictum of his teacher Dr. Forsyth which left an abiding impression on his mind. Said Dr. Forsyth : "You may talk as much as you like of the divine immanence, so long as you remember that it is the

immanence of the transcendent." This is anything but an empty paradox. It presents a vital consideration.

The second objection which may be glanced at here, is that the method proposed in our enquiry involves so radical a breach with all our ordinary ways of thought and enquiry that it cannot be entertained. In all fruitful enquiry, it is said, we proceed from the known to the unknown and that to proceed in any other way is, in Dr. Mackintosh's words, "to build from the roof." To begin, not with man and his experience, but with God and His approach to these, is, it is said, to proceed from the unknown to the known and that is an impossible proceeding. But here again, is it not too easily assumed that there is no radical and fundamental problem of knowledge? When we speak of advancing from the known to the unknown, the question arises, what is it that is really known? Can anything be said to be truly known, unless everything is known? It would take us too far to discuss the problem of knowledge in its far-reaching philosophical implications. But it is an unwarrantable supposition that no kind of knowledge can be made possible for man, save that which consists in an extension of his ordinary rational knowledge. It is a trite observation that what we call knowledge is a partial thing, that is, a knowledge of parts and not of the whole. But inasmuch as it is the knowledge of parts, is it in the last resort knowledge at all? Is the whole a mere collection of the parts? Is it not rather that which alone gives real meaning to the parts, so that knowledge of the whole can alone supply real knowledge of the parts? Tennyson's well-known lines about the "flower in the crannied wall" suggest that really to know anything, even the simplest thing must involve the knowledge of the whole :

If I could understand
What you are, root and all, and all in all,
I should know what God and man is.

We know much about a thing, but the thing in itself eludes our understanding. And when we speak about proceeding from the known to the unknown, do we mean that we work up to knowledge of the thing in itself, by applying the method by which we know *about* it? Certainly any witness to revelation which proclaimed our knowledge and experience to be simply illusory, which denied its relative right and validity, could not be entertained. But it is conceivable, to say the least, that we might possess a witness which set forth the true relation of this relative knowledge of ours to real knowledge.

When we suggest that nothing is really known until the whole is known, so that to talk about working up from the known to the unknown is at bottom an empty phrase, we are not indulging in a feat of verbal legerdemain. For whatever may be our theoretical or philosophical standpoint, in personal experience the ultimate incomprehensibility of all existence becomes an inescapable and poignant fact. We rejoice in our knowledge only, in the main, when we are able to detach ourselves from real existence and take up the position of spectators of the world and life. When we can, as it were, withdraw to a point outside of life, and contemplate the world as an object, when we just look on and analyse and classify, we feel that we are getting to know. But there are moments of experience, points of existence, in which the whole of our knowledge becomes problematic. The philosopher as philosopher may feel that he knows much, but the philosopher as man, as the

living existential point in which the mystery of the world becomes consciousness and experience is aware that he knows nothing. Job in the midst of his distress is not comforted at all by the reasons and explanations of his friends. It is he that is in the dark, and not merely certain tracks of his mind. The man, standing at the moment of existence, is the mystery and not just certain outlying regions in his mind and consciousness. And he emerges into a new light only as it is brought home to him that in his experience, as he stands at his moment of existence and not in any position of spectator, the fundamental mysteriousness and incomprehensibility of *everything* rise into clear manifestation. Obviously, if his experience were a case of exception in a field of reality otherwise known, there would be nothing more to say about it. Some form of naturalism would be the explanation of the world, or even may be, some form of philosophical idealism, for all philosophic idealism implies that evil is in some sense necessary to the Absolute.¹ But what Job knows of a surety as he stands at the moment of existence is that the mystery of his experience is both real mystery, and that it is so to speak the precipitation into experience of a fundamental and universal mystery which belongs to everything that is. And knowing that, understanding that the world as a whole is one huge question-mark, he perceives both that an answer there must be, for in no part of it is the world self-explanatory, and that that answer cannot be found in the world but must come to the world.

Thus when we are urged to mount up from the known to the unknown we reply, if one only could! But what in the last resort is known? Is there any continuous way from our partial, outside, theoretical knowledge to real

¹ See Bosanquet, *The Value and Destiny of the Individual*, p. 15.

knowledge, from knowledge about a thing to the thing in itself, from the "flower in the crannied wall" to God and man? And any witness which declares that there is no such continuous path from our side, that the way is from God to man and not from man to God is not to be set aside *ab initio*. It may well be that the parts are known only as the whole is given, that the real knowledge comes through a fundamental criticism of what we call knowledge, a criticism which in virtue of being such, will establish the right of our knowledge by making clear its relativity.

But, it may be said, there is one region of our nature where we do possess real knowledge, knowledge that is, not of parts, and not merely about things, but of the whole; and that is the region of our religious consciousness. The religious consciousness, it is said, is an inalienable possession of the human consciousness generally. It belongs to man as man, however weak it may be in this man or that man. And therein is given an immediate intuition of God, of the whole, which is the fundamental knowledge which validates all our knowledge. Revelation will consist in the extension, deepening, purifying and clarifying of this part of our nature. ¹Thus Dr. Oman in his book *The Natural and the Supernatural* after pointing out that man has been rightly defined as a rational animal, as a tool-using animal, as a laughing animal, and as a religious animal, observes that it is necessary to look for a common root for all these distinctive characteristics and to see in one of them the stem and in the others the branches. The common root, he says, is man's non-acceptance of his environment. To be rational, to use tools, to laugh in the face of life, to be religious, witness, each in its own way, to the fact

¹ p. 82, *et seq.*

that man has won a victory over his environment. But, says Dr. Oman, "it is very improbable that man won four separate and unconnected victories over his environment. One must have been the stem and the others the branches." He concludes that the stem is in man's religious consciousness for "only one thing in life challenges in its own right man's submission to his environment and that is the sacred," and man's consciousness of the sacred belongs to his definition as man. Thus in religion man is in immediate contact with the supernatural, he has an intuitive knowledge of the whole and in this contact and knowledge his reason and action are validated.

And Dr. Adam in his article on 'Theology' in the *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*, concludes that philosophy of religion is the highest stage or form of theology. What is proposed is a thorough-going examination of the religious experience and particularly of the Christian experience which is regarded as essentially continuous with the religious experience in general, whatever and however far-reaching the modifications may be which it brings into this; a correlation of all this with the rest of our knowledge and experience; and all issuing in a philosophy of religion in which the distinctively Christian witness is of course contributory but cannot be sole. Here again we have the idea of a more or less straight path from man to God, from man as a religious consciousness to God and revelation. There is a religious *a priori* within the soul which is the organ of revelation.

So again Schaefer¹ in his *Geistproblem der Theologie* though insisting that theology must be theocentric, and that the movement of revelation is a movement from God

¹ For a more detailed notice of Schaefer's book, see C. IV.

to man and not from man to God, is yet anxious to represent that movement as a meeting and carrying forward of a movement which takes its rise in the spirit of man. It is distinguished from this in its source and origin rather than in its fundamental nature. Revelation accordingly possesses a deep and abiding kinship with philosophical idealism which points the way to real knowledge of the world. ¹ Dr. Wheeler Robinson takes up much the same attitude in his book *The Christian Experience of the Holy Spirit*. He begins with religious experience and will find the warrant of all that comes with the claim to be revelation in the nature of the human spirit. In surveying the Biblical witness he notes indeed that the true Hebrew dualism is "not the contrast between the human body and soul (or spirit) but that between terrestrial nature as being of one order and celestial as being of another." And he very truly observes that "except for the divine spirit in His historic work and transcendent power, we should not know as we do, the nature of the spirit in man." It is not altogether easy to understand from this, how he can maintain that "the true discovery of transcendence is through immanence."² He adds, however, that "in the light of the realised revelation we come back to see its warrant already in the nature of human spirit finding its highest life in relation with other spirits, and realising its life at the highest in sacrificial devotion and unselfish love."³ And in speaking of Christ as a new fact, a new disclosure and not merely as the highest achievement of the human race he remarks "the new fact may, after all, be related to the old realities (that is, the spiritual factors of human personality in general) as is the flower to the root, the flower that we should never have inferred from the root.

¹ p. 10.² p. 56.³ p. 75.

Our fundamental assumption was the ultimate kinship of God and man, and we must not lightly surrender this."¹

We have thus, in these writers, who may be taken as representing the modern tendency in religious and theological thought, the idea of a more or less direct continuity between the religious consciousness as an original datum, and the knowledge of God ; a proceeding, so far as the interpretation of revelation is concerned, from the known to the unknown, a taking of religious experience as the point of departure, and the religious *a priori* as the organ of revelation.

Now here again, it must be obvious that any witness to revelation which simply set aside the religious consciousness, declared it null and void, denied the existence of any religious *a priori* in the soul of man or refused it any validity, would *ipso facto* fall to the ground. A God to Whom we did not belong, a God Who had left no witness of Himself within the human consciousness, a God between Whom and man there were no personal connections and relationships, would not be God at all. It is precisely in the fact of such connections and relationships that God is the God of our life. But the question arises, of what nature are these connections and relationships ? It may very well be that owing, let us say, to man's sin and fall, these very connections and relationships have become the supreme problem of man's life, and by no means its solution. It may very well be that man's religious consciousness is the field in which the problematic in man's experience generally, gathers to a head and reaches its acutest point. And here again the question must be delivered from all merely theoretical associations and placed at the centre of the individual's

¹ pp. 117-118.

own personal existence. We ask, does the individual man, standing at the moment of his personal existence, realise himself to be in possession of the knowledge of God through the contemplation of his religious consciousness as a striking fact which challenges attention, and through the recollection of the religious *a priori* within his own soul? Is it not rather the case that standing simply there, he feels his distance from God, his alienation from Him? Is it not the case that, standing simply there, he is conscious of perplexity, darkness, mystery and trouble of heart? Must not something come *to* him, a word from without sound in his ears? Must not something *happen* to him and happen *in* him if he is to know God, something which will not simply bring out and make him see a kinship with God belonging to his nature as such, but which will effect this kinship in a new creative way? Is not the religious consciousness pre-eminently, the field in which the knowledge of God comes home only by way of a fundamental crisis and a new and creative decision?

And are we not precisely here up against the fact which makes so utterly impossible the suggestion which is sometimes thrown out, that we should construct as it were, a universal religion out of the different religions of the world taken as the various forms in which man's religious consciousness expresses itself? Do not all attempts in this direction lead eventually to mere humanism? Do they not involve in the long run a turning away from God, a dismissal of Him from belief, and not a turning to Him? And yet, if the kinship between the human spirit and the divine be taken as our point of departure, why should such attempts be thus impossible? Why should we consent to remain in particularism? Why not strive after unification in the religious field? Does

not the fact that the religions of the world cannot be amalgamated, that all attempts in that direction at last sacrifice God in the process, indicate that in the religious consciousness, in the religious *a priori*, we have a problem, indeed *the* problem of existence? As Cardinal Newman said, "Many a man will live and die upon a dogma; no man will be a martyr for a conclusion." Religion "has ever been synonymous with Revelation. It has never been a deduction from what we know, it has ever been an assertion of what we are to believe . . . a message, or a history, or a vision."¹

The relation then between the religious *a priori* and the consciousness of revelation is by no means direct and clear. And if we are confronted with a witness to revelation which will not make identical the religious *a priori* and the subjective possibility of revelation, we are not entitled to refuse examination of it, on that ground. The relation between God and the world, may not be from our side a direct relationship at all; it may prove to be very indirect. In its directness and so that it becomes the possibility of real knowledge, it may be visible from God's side alone, and from our side only as God directly gives Himself in revelation.

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Our examination of these objections to the method proposed leads to the conclusion that they arise from the pre-supposition that we possess from our side and in our knowledge and experience, something which is in no wise problematic and questionable, something which stands out clear and sure, and offers us a definite point of departure, something, therefore, which we can take

¹ See *Newman*, by William Barry, p. 154.

forthwith and make the criterion of everything that comes to us with a claim to be revelation. We have seen that this pre-supposition is itself questionable. And it may very well be, that the supreme warrant of revelation from our side will be seen to be the very thoroughness and decisiveness with which we as men find ourselves, in all the experiences and activities of our life, called in question. The paradox may be ventured, that revelation alone can make us see how decisively we stand in question, that scepticism itself cannot reveal man's life in its true and fundamental questionableness as revelation does. Does this mean an escape into sheer irrationality and arbitrariness? This would be desperation indeed. But let the following pages answer if they can.

CHAPTER II

THE WITNESS TO REVELATION

THE New Testament witness to revelation gathers round one who is called Jesus Christ. It sets forth a man who arose at a certain point in human history, isolates him as it were from all who came before and all who should follow after, and attributes to him a meaning and a significance which it finds in no other. This man is now to be 'followed' with absolute decision even if it means the turning away from everybody and everything else.

But though this man is thus 'isolated,' he appears in a context. The witness relates him to preceding history and to any history that might come after him. He does not appear without connections and without a context. He stands in definite and declared relation with a specific movement in human history, a movement whose record is given in a body of writings known as "the law and the prophets." This movement, moreover, is related to history in general. That is to say, it is regarded as the movement whose nature it is to draw all history into itself. The people in whose life it takes place are an 'elect' people, a people whose history exists for a purpose which is the divine purpose for the world. This people, it is said, will be vindicated before all the peoples of the earth, vindicated that is, as the people on whom the divine purpose in and for the world took specific effect. It is necessary to note that the relation of this people to the rest of mankind is no natural or historical relation, no relation that the historian might draw out. The historian may, and of course, must place the chosen people as a branch of the Semitic race

and correlate its history and institutions with universal history. But not thus will he light upon the real, the ultimate relationship of this people with the families of mankind. This relationship is set up by God Himself, it exists in the counsels of His will, it is established by deed of covenant. Knowledge of it is no matter of historical investigation, but of divine revelation. So runs the witness.

But this man appears in this context after a fashion that can only be called critical. First, he brings the movement represented by this people, and this chapter of world-history, to an end. "The prophets and the law prophesied until John"—henceforth something new. The movement of which we have spoken is not simply carried on by him; it is brought to a point of finality and conclusion. The line stretching down through the law and the prophets, reaches in him its term. He is eschatological in his significance and relation thereto. And inasmuch as this line itself stands for God's line in the world, inasmuch as the movement in whose context he stands expresses the fundamental purpose of history in general, or rather for history in general, he is eschatological in his significance for the whole world.

But his relation to his context is critical in a deeper sense still. It registers not the success of the history destined by God for the effectuation of His purpose, but its failure. The chosen people turn out to be the enemy. The divine movement in the history manifests itself in Jesus Christ as bringing condemnation and rejection on the very people who are called out for it. The history of the chosen people not only comes to an end in him, it is *brought* to an end. That is to say, it reaches in him not merely its culmination, but its

crisis and its annulment. Jesus stands fundamentally not in line with his people, but over against them. His people reject and crucify him, and their crucifying of him is their own judgment and condemnation. But that means that all history is brought under crisis and condemnation. It is the spirit of the world which asserts itself in the rejection and condemnation of Christ. The movement *of* history will not have the divine movement *for* history. The fact that the movement of God in history is in the end resisted, refused, and rejected by the very people called out for its recognition and realisation means that history itself falls under the divine condemnation. Israel in rejecting Christ shows that it has fallen under the sway of the prince of this world. So Jesus is eschatological for Israel and for the world, not primarily in the sense that he brings them to an end, but in the sense that he brings them under judgment. Such again is the witness.

But there is yet more to be said. Crisis is of the very nature of this man's existence in the world. As belonging to this world, as part of Jewish history and universal history, he himself must come to an end. His meaning and significance cannot appear while his earthly and temporal life remains. He is manifested as the Christ only on the further side of his temporal existence. On this side, the hither side, his Christhood must remain a secret. He is not yet, what he really and truly *is*. He must die in order that his glory may appear. He is eschatological even in regard to his own human and temporal self. But as humbling himself, emptying himself, and becoming obedient unto death, yea the death of the Cross, he receives the great exaltation, and the name which is above every name, so that in his name

every knee shall bow in heaven and on earth, and every tongue confess that he is Lord. In this man, therefore, finality is reached. Before him, the history of the chosen people falls away, universal history falls away, even his own human and temporal existence falls away, and that which is new, that which belongs not to the course of things here, but to the course of things yonder, appears: so that, "if any man is in Christ there is a new creation, the old things are passed away; behold they are become new" (2 Cor. v, 17).

And yet the old things still remain. The world has not yet run its course. There is still an interim before the end. In this man Jesus, has occurred something final in the relations between God and the world. A final deed of God has taken place, yet the finality is not yet actually here, for the world and history still continue. The final deed, therefore, as it reaches the actual world can only reach it as final word; a message, an address, a critical challenge, a great promise and hope. It can be seen as deed of God only as it is believed as word of God. It cannot in the strict sense be experienced, for the world and history are left standing, it can only be believed. The historical event is not as such divine event. The deed of God takes the *form* of an historical event, something which belongs to the world and history still standing. Its inner meaning and content are not historical, they are eschatological, that is, they signify the end of history, they mean that history is brought under judgment. From them all history, all that is here, falls away. The divine meaning of the deed is not the same as its historical meaning and significance. Historically the death of Christ means an act of human heroism and sacrifice. Eschatologically and as divine and not human deed, it proclaims the end

and the new beginning of history and the world. Since, therefore, the divine deed takes a human and historical form, it is not the same thing as what *we* call deed. What we call deed is actual, experienced happening. But the world is still standing. The end and the new beginning are not yet here. All that is actually here, belonging to our history, is the historical deed itself, the form which the divine deed took. Therefore this divine deed is for us, meaning, significance, message, promise, revelation. A meaning and a message break out from the historical event which are other than its historical meaning and significance. The divine word is no mere verbal message from outside of or alongside of the historical event ; it is the divine meaning, sense, content of the event reaching man's consciousness and eliciting therefrom the response of faith. It is the spirit of the deed. And inasmuch as the word is the word of an absolute judgment and an absolute promise and grace, the word which speaks of all things being brought to an end and a new beginning, the spirit, sense, significance of it as it reaches our consciousness is *the* Spirit, the Holy Spirit of God. Accordingly that which is new arises in faith, but strictly speaking only in faith : not in actuality, not in experience in the ordinary meaning of that word, but in faith alone, in that response and orientation of man's consciousness brought about by the receiving and believing of the word. Faith now becomes the all-important thing : not faith in general but faith in the absolute and final sense, faith as new and critical decision, faith awakened by finality and therefore faith itself become here and now the finality for men ; faith in nothing here, in life, in history, in man, but faith in that from which all here falls away. Faith now becomes not that which man can justify,

but that which alone can justify man. A radically new meaning is given to faith.

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But we must now return to our starting-point and examine more closely the nature of the witness borne to revelation.

This witness, we have said, all gathers round one who is called Jesus Christ. And we observe: it is of Jesus Christ set forth under two aspects; first under the aspect of a human historical life, and second under that of a supra-temporal, transcendent mode of existence. There is the Christ after the flesh, and the Christ after the Spirit; the human Jesus, and the risen Christ exalted to the right hand of God. And there are two things to be borne in mind in this connection which are of supreme importance. First, the relation between these two aspects of Jesus is from the human and rational point of view, not a continuity but a radical discontinuity. It is a relation of death and resurrection. Nowhere in the New Testament is the unity between the human Jesus and the transcendent Christ placed in anything which is rationally discernible and discoverable in the former. Nowhere is it suggested that in the human Jesus as such, there was some principle or power in virtue of which he 'survived' death and passed straight on to a transcendent mode of existence. He died and was raised up. He did not 'survive' and develop into his exalted mode of life. He did not just pass from a lower to a higher stage of being. His death was no mere episode in an essentially continuous mode of existence. The risen exalted Christ does not stand merely for a principle in the human Jesus shown to be permanent

and abiding. He is separated from the human Jesus by a discontinuity which from the human and rational point of view is ultimate, namely death and resurrection. We have to do, of course, with the one Christ throughout, but a Christ after two modes of existence which nothing in our thought can bring together.

And the second point to be noted in this : it is Jesus under the new risen, transcendent aspect of his life, and not under the aspect of his human and historical life, who is declared to be revelation. The New Testament contention is not that the man Jesus was shown by the resurrection to be, as such, the likeness, the manifestation, of God. The Revelation is not, as many would have it to-day, that God is like Jesus. The statement that God is like Jesus contains no doubt an important element of truth, but as it is used to-day it gives a meaning to the word revelation which is not that of the New Testament witness. The manhood, the historical personality is not as such divine. Whenever the manhood of Jesus is held up as example, it is not in its positive human excellence, as if that manhood in its expression of itself were revelation ; it is rather in its negative and renunciatory aspects. It is in his manhood's surrender, negating and dispossessing and not in its full and free *expression*, that the human Jesus takes upon himself the character of divinity. It is in his self-emptying and obedience unto death, yea the death of the Cross, that Jesus manifests to the full the mind that should be in us. Not as manhood expressing itself, but as manhood renouncing itself does Jesus stand out before our view. The human Jesus, the personality of the man Jesus is never the 'locale' of revelation in the New Testament. His resurrection is no mere emphasizing, bringing out, clarifying, and intensifying

of a revelatory quality or character of the manhood as such. It is not the Christ after the flesh, but the Christ after the Spirit, the Spirit of Him who raised up Jesus from the dead, who is set forth as the Son of God with revelatory meaning and power. The paradox is expressed in the opening words of St. Paul's epistle to the Romans: "born of David's offspring by natural descent, and installed as Son of God with power by the Spirit of holiness when he was raised from the dead." (Romans i, 3-4. Moffatt's Translation.)

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We may pause here to note that this witness of the New Testament to Jesus Christ as revelation is reinforced by a judgment which comes from the side of historical criticism. Thus Schweitzer, in dealing with the Messianic consciousness of Jesus, alleges that in the thought of Jesus himself, his Messiahship was not yet, but that it belonged to a mode of existence in the future between which and his actual present life, no connection can be expressed in rational terms. He says: "It is impossible to express in modern terms the consciousness of messiahship which Jesus imparted as a secret to his disciples. Whether we describe it as an identity between him and the Son of Man who is to appear, whether we express it as a continuity which unites both personalities, or think of it as virtually a pre-existent messiahship—none of these modern conceptions can render the consciousness of Jesus as the Disciples understood it. What we lack is the 'Now and Then' which dominated their thinking and which explains a curious duality of consciousness that was characteristic of them. What we might call

¹ *The Mystery of the Kingdom of God*, pp. 186-187.

identity, continuity and potentiality, was in their mind confounded in a conception which quite eludes our grasp. Every person figured himself in two entirely different states, according as he thought of himself now in the pre-messianic age, and then the messianic. Expressions which we interpret only in accordance with our unity of consciousness, they referred as a matter of course to the double¹ consciousness familiar to them. Therefore when Jesus revealed to them the secret of his messiahship, that did not mean to them that he *is* the Messiah, as we moderns must understand it; rather it signified for them that their Lord and Master was the one who, in the messianic age, would be revealed as the Messiah." He also says: ¹"The Resurrection of the dead is the bridge from the 'Now' to the 'Then'."

Moreover Schweitzer declares that not as human personality, not as Jewish rabbi, not as teacher of his disciples did Jesus think of himself as the revelation of God: ²"the Messiah in his earthly state must live and labour unrecognised, he must teach, and through deed and suffering, he must be made perfect in righteousness. Not till then shall the messianic age dawn . . . Thus in the midst of the messianic expectation of his people stood Jesus as the Messiah that is to be. He dare not reveal himself to them, for the reason of his hidden labour was not yet over."

Now it is not our purpose to discuss or defend this as a critical conclusion, for our concern here is not with any critical construction of the life and thought of Jesus. Our concern is with the witness, the New Testament interpretation of Jesus as revelation. We ask, how is Jesus set forth as the revelation of God? But the fact that such a conclusion appears from the side of an

¹ *The Mystery of the Kingdom of God*, p. 208.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 188-189.

historical criticism which has no apologetic ends to serve, confirms us in our belief that we are not misreading the witness.

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To resume then: the New Testament gospel is not the report of the human Jesus, his religion, his subjective relation to God, brought out and illumined by the resurrection. It is not the statement of something of positive and eternal worth in the historical personality as such, emphasized and made clear through the fact that it was capable of surviving death. The New Testament witness to revelation is, as has often been pointed out, astonishingly indifferent to the historical Jesus as such. The modern conception of a great, dynamic, historical personality radiating spiritual vitality and power is not the New Testament emphasis. The gospel all gathers round the word of a great human, rational, discontinuity turned into a new divine continuity by the deed and action of God Himself. It implies that just at that point when everything human comes to an end, all thought, all knowledge, all effort, something begins from the side of God which from the point of view of us men is quite new and entirely different. The principal thing in the New Testament witness to the historic Jesus, is not that he lived, but that he died, not that he expressed the native powers and excellences of a human personality but that he renounced them, not that his humanity as it were flowered into divinity, but that it gave itself up to the approach of divinity. The relation of the humanity to the divinity is in the nature of a negative to a positive. He "emptied himself . . . wherefore also God highly exalted him, and gave

unto him the name which is above every name”
(Phil. ii, 7 & 9, R.V.).

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It is necessary to distinguish between the New Testament *story* of Jesus, the account which it presents of his historical life and teaching, and the New Testament *witness* of him as the revelation of God. The story was written for the express purpose of confirming the witness. There can therefore be no question of disparaging the story. The assertion which is frequently made that the standpoint which is here taken up results in a depreciation of the historical Jesus, that it ends in taking all religious and revelatory value out of the story of his life is based upon misunderstanding. Indeed the light and the value will be far greater than anything that mere historical criticism and construction working in independence of the witness can possibly yield. At every point in the story divine revelation will shine through. ¹ This criticism also comes with bad grace from many who, while insisting that we must confine ourselves to the historical Jesus, the Jesus of historical criticism and investigation, are busy in reducing our knowledge of him to ever smaller dimensions. A nucleus of historical fact is declared by them to be necessary, but there is no agreement as to what this nucleus is. But it is surely clear that if we are to speak about revelation, our first question must be not what can we, starting as it were, *de novo*, make of the story, but what is the nature of the witness? After what manner is this Jesus spoken of as the revelation of God? Of course, if we find that the witness cannot sustain

¹ A fuller treatment of this criticism will be found in C.8.

itself, that it does not after all speak consistently and coherently of revelation, we may then turn to the story, attempt to isolate it from its context in the witness of revelation, and deal with it after a purely critical and historical manner. We can abstract it from that interpretation in which it is set forth as revelation, and treat it simply in itself. And of course there will always be a place for this abstraction. But criticism itself is awakening to the perception that the story treated thus *is* an abstraction; and no finality has as yet been attained, or ever seems likely to be attained, in the conclusions reached. In any case our task is clear. We are enquiring about revelation. Here, it is said, in this figure of our history, Jesus Christ, is revelation given. We enquire how is Jesus revelation? Our attention is focussed upon the witness to the revelation given in Jesus, and with this witness we must first concern ourselves.

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Now inasmuch as according to the witness we have the one Christ after two modes of existence, the connection between which is not natural or rational, but supernatural and transcendent, we find involved in varying degrees of explicitness in the statements of the New Testament witness the following position. The essential nature of this man, his person, the ground of his ego, that which lay behind his psychological states of consciousness which the mere spectator can in a measure perceive and scrutinise, is divine and transcendent. There is a secret in this man. Nay more, in the last reality of his being, he is a secret. He cannot be understood, interpreted or explained by any of our ordinary modes of understanding. We possess in

ourselves no faculty for apprehending who he was. The understanding of him is itself part of the new event to which he belongs. "No one knoweth the Son save the Father" (Matthew xi, 27 R.V.). His secret does not lie upon the plane of historical visibility or psychological explanation. Of course, there is a sense in which this can be said of every great human personality. The greater a man is, the more difficult it is to understand him. But what we are confronted with in the witness concerning this man, is no relative distinction between him and other men, but an absolute distinction. Inasmuch as he is set forth under the terms of death and resurrection, inasmuch as between the Jesus after the flesh and the Christ after the Spirit, there is, humanly speaking, a discontinuity which no thought can bridge, we are unable to rank him merely with the great figures of our history whose personalities transcend our ordinary understanding. We come up against a difference not merely in degree, but in kind. There is something in this man, so the witness everywhere implies, which is divine and *not* human. We may perhaps anticipate by remarking here, that some form of the "two-nature" Christology seems to be called for. Many people would set this aside *ab initio* on the grounds that it is irreconcilable with the psychological unity of human personality. Christ, they say, must be interpreted in terms of the psychological unity of personality. We shall have more to say about this in a later chapter. But here, it is pertinent to point out, that we cannot be held back by any *a priori* 'musts'. The 'must' implies that nothing new came into the world in Christ, an implication which sets aside from the start the very possibility of revelation as the witness declares it. This possibility must not be set aside on any *a priori* grounds.

It is difficult to keep *a priori* pre-suppositions out of the theological field, even as it is difficult to keep them out of the scientific field, but in both cases it must be done. Theories must fit facts, and not facts theories. And the fact here is not the human personality of Jesus as such, but the witness. Certainly if that witness cannot be sustained, *cadit quæstio*, but until that conclusion is legitimately reached, the witness may not be set aside on the ground that it violates some *a priori* pre-supposition of the psychological unity of personality. And it is of the nature of the witness that the essential thing about Christ, the secret of his Person is not capable of historical or psychological explanation. It is cognisable not by reason as such, but by that entirely new kind of reason called faith, a reason conditioned by a new and transcendental relation set up, not from our side at all, but from the other side of that boundary where our human thought stumbles not upon a rational continuity but a fundamental discontinuity. In other words Jesus is to be understood as revelation only in and through that which the New Testament calls the Holy Spirit. We shall endeavour in subsequent chapters to bring this idea of the Holy Spirit into clearer expression, both in its relation to the Person of Christ and to that new reason, that new mode of consciousness which we call faith. Here and now our concern is simply to emphasize the fact that according to the witness, the presence of Jesus in the world stands for the reconciliation of what is from our human standpoints irreconcilable, that it betokens the divine life under a human veil, the veil of mortality, and the divine will and purpose under the veil of the "flesh of sin." The contention that thereby the problem of Christology becomes insoluble, must not be given too much weight. It is not a matter of the first

importance to solve the problem of Christology, but it is essential to grasp the terms of the problem. Barth raises the question "can theology and ought theology to pass beyond prolegomena to Christology?"¹ And he answers, "it might be that with the prolegomena all is said." Nor need we be deterred by the assertion that historical criticism reveals to us in Jesus a man whose consciousness falls within our categories of a psychologically unified personality: for, apart from any other consideration, criticism is not agreed in revealing Jesus after this fashion. Schweitzer, for example, as we have seen, asserts a duality of consciousness in Jesus which is not capable of rational solution, and though he doubtless would refuse to make that duality an essential part of Christology, he asserts it to be a matter of sheer historical fact that Jesus did think of himself in terms drawn from the idea of two modes of being and consciousness. It is unwarrantable to assume that Jesus was here wrong, on the ground that such a conception cannot be fitted into our modern psychological categories. In any case, the putting of the 'locale' of revelation not in the human and historical Jesus as such, but in the risen and exalted Lord, and the putting between these of the complete rational discontinuity of death and resurrection, involve according to the witness, that Jesus, in the ground of his being, stands discontinuous with the rest of humanity and can only be understood after a divine and transcendent manner, through that which the New Testament calls the Holy Spirit. Such, we repeat, is the witness.

And it is to be noted that this is the fundamental witness of the New Testament as a whole. Time was, when it was thought possible to drive a wedge between

¹ *Das Wort Gottes*, p. 178.

the synoptic portrait of Jesus and that of the rest of the New Testament. That time has gone, or at least it is rapidly going. If there is one result of criticism which we can regard as to all intents and purposes established, it is that the synoptic gospels were written by men who saw revelation not in the historical Jesus as such, but in the historical Jesus interpreted in terms drawn from the conception of a transcendent mode of life. The interest of the synoptics was not biographical, it was apologetic, it was even theological. Of course, it is possible to deny the truth, the validity, of this interpretation. One can for example declare that in the New Testament conception of him, we have an illustration of the deifying of a human and historical figure. Or one can bring to one's aid a general philosophy of religion and postulate a deep and abiding continuity between humanity and divinity; and on the basis of that pre-supposition, declare that the historical Jesus by virtue of the spiritual power and impressiveness of his personality, became the medium of the life of God to the world. But what must not be ignored is that in so doing a big assumption is being made; the assumption namely that Jesus must be treated first and foremost from the historical point of view, and that everything that is attributed to him of divinity flows from the effect of his human and historical life and personality. Men seek to explain the transcendent Christ from the historical effect and impression of the human Jesus. Because, it is said, Jesus was this kind of personality, divinity was inevitably (some would say rightly) attributed to him. But if we proceed thus, we must be clear that we are proceeding with pre-suppositions that are other than those which governed the New Testament witness. Here the power of the exalted Christ is of a different nature from the impact

and influence of the historical Jesus as such. To insist on explaining Jesus historically and rationally, is to begin by denying the specific nature and content of the New Testament witness. It is to assume from the start that we have to do with nothing more and nothing other than an historical fact with its historical sequences and effects. It is strange that the enormous nature of this assumption is so poorly seen. When Paul declares that "no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost" (1 Cor. xii, 3), he clearly means something very much more, and something quite other than that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, save by surrendering himself to the historic influence and the personal spell of the man Jesus.

We may note too that, so far as our knowledge can reach backwards into the faith of the earliest church, it shows us that a believer might be described in two ways which were regarded as identical ; first, he was a man who believed that Jesus was the Christ, and second, he was a man who had received the Holy Spirit. That means that the finding of divinity in Jesus was not, in the opinion of the early church, an historical judgment, but that it resulted from supernatural revelation. It was not that men came to attribute a divine value to Jesus merely because of his influence upon them, but that they came to do so, in virtue supremely of what was, to mere reason, a sheer miracle, in virtue of the fact, that is, that they had received a supernatural endowment, the Holy Spirit. Truly in order of time a man might confess that Jesus was the Christ, that he was divine revelation, before he received the Holy Spirit. His endowment with the Spirit was no doubt regarded by the earliest church as following on his confession of Jesus as Lord. But this confession resulted upon the witness of the

Church, the Spirit-filled community. It was a man's response to a witness which was empowered by the Holy Spirit. And as a result of the confession, the individual was made sharer in the life of the Church; he received the Holy Spirit as a personal endowment which stamped him as now part of the Spirit-filled community.

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And here seems to be the place to make the following observation. Assuming that the witness is valid, historical criticism of the records for the purpose of discovering the actual human Jesus and reconstructing the events of his life, does not touch the nerve of revelation. For the New Testament witness is that not in him treated from the historical point of view does revelation lie. Not the Christ after the flesh, the Christ who is tractable to historical and critical enquiry, but the Christ after the Spirit is the subject of revelation; and between these two there is a dualism, certainly not ultimate or revelation would be impossible, but rationally ultimate, the dualism marked by the words death and resurrection. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (John iii, 6) is here as applicable to Jesus as to any other member of the human race. The two sides of the antithesis are complete in themselves, from every rational point of view. Their synthesis is indicated by the words "ye must be born from above" (John iii, 7. see margin), no rational but an entirely supra-rational and transcendent synthesis. The Christ according to the flesh, and the Christ according to the Spirit belong to two circles. These circles are rationally disparate,

completely non-coincident. Revelation consists in the manifestation of their divine, transcendent coincidence, expressed by the New Testament term, the Holy Spirit. It is useless then to expect that criticism will have any positive contribution to make to revelation. It may indeed make a negative contribution of immense value. It does revelation service when it insists on its full rights, when it will permit no circle to be drawn round any historical events from which it is to be warned off. In insisting upon its full rights it helps to clarify the issue, to make it plain that revelation cannot be found in that which lies sheer upon the historical field, but only in that which may open out from history to that kind of apprehension which is called faith. It can help to make clear what is not revelation but it cannot discover what is. So, it is needless to fear lest criticism should imperil revelation. The data of criticism are not the data of revelation. The sphere in which criticism does its work is cut off from that in which revelation functions, by a chasm which is unbridgeable by any rational or scientific method. The critical method applied to the sphere of revelation, assumes that the relation between an historical figure of the past, the figure of Jesus of Nazareth, and the life of the present, is simply that of the historical influence and effect of his life and work, and can be no other. In other words, it begins by assuming that what the New Testament designates by the Holy Spirit is an unreality. But by what right does it make this assumption? If there is a relation between a figure of the past and the life of the present which is transcendent and supra-rational it is clear that criticism can neither affirm nor deny it. Such a revelation is simply outside the sphere in which historical criticism functions.

But, it may be objected, is it not conceivable that

criticism might succeed in demonstrating that Jesus never existed at all? Or failing that, might it not prove that the Jesus of history was a man of whom such a transcendent relation to life could not possibly be predicated, for example that he was a political or social revolutionary? These objections have been dealt with by Brunner in his book *Der Mittler*.¹ Brunner agrees that if either of these positions were established, the case would be hopeless. But, as he asserts, the actual findings of criticism up to date are the exact opposite. And the utmost that criticism could ever accomplish would be to demonstrate the *possibility* of the one or the other of these conclusions, but never their *necessity*. It might say, for example, that historically the existence of Jesus *may* be denied, it can never say that it *must* be denied. The historical critic, as such, is of course under no obligation to accept the witness of revelation; but he is not in a position to say that the Jesus of history was a figure of whom the apostolic witness could not be the true interpretation, nor is there the remotest likelihood of his ever being in such a position.

Moreover, it must not be forgotten that revelation has something fundamental to say about history itself. It brings with it a theological interpretation of history. It proclaims that history has a divine, transcendent reference. In that interpretation, and in that reference, the place of Jesus in history is involved, and for the believer it is established. The question of the historicity of Jesus is paradoxically not merely an historical one, it has its faith aspect as well. Only if the historical aspect and the faith aspect be in irreconcilable conflict, does the situation become hopeless. But that,

¹ See the chapter "Der Christusglaube und die historische Forschung," and especially pp. 160-161.

in the nature of things, can never become a serious possibility.

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And now, having noted in what manner the New Testament witness to revelation gathers round the figure of Jesus Christ, we are in a position to indicate more definitely what that witness is. It is, that in Jesus Christ regarded as we have regarded him, man discovers his immediacy to God, or more precisely God's immediacy to him. The New Testament echoes with the din of controversy; against Judaism, against Gnosticism, and against heathenism. And the insistence that creates and sustains all this controversial activity is that now Christ has come, all intermediaries between God and man, of whatever nature, are done away and man stands in immediate and direct relation to God. The gravamen of the charge against Judaism and Gnosticism in the theoretical field, against heathenism with its idol-worship, and also against asceticism and all work-righteousness in the field of man's practical life, was the fundamental denial implied by all these, of the immediacy of God to man and man to God in Christ. The New Testament insists with unflagging emphasis, that there is no ladder of angels, æons, spirits, dominations, linking up earthly man with the transcendent God. Against such spiritual hierarchies the Christian warfare was unceasingly directed. Nor were there any intermediate stages between the righteousness of God and the righteousness of man, no bridges, no half-way houses, no laws, ordinances, sanctities—no intermixings of the one with the other. There was no continuity between man and God of a rational, speculative, religious or moral kind. The discontinuity was complete, and because of that, the new

continuity in Christ, the immediacy between God and man, man and God, was complete. The intermediaries, links, continuities go, all of them, but Christ remains. And it is because of Christ that the intermediaries go. Christ is the presence in our world of common rational experience of a new dimension belonging to the transcendent world. He is no intermediary; his existence precludes the idea of intermediaries. His existence betokens the immediacy of God Himself to men.

But now in what sense does it betoken this immediacy? Not in the sense that we wake up, as it were, to the truth of God's nearness as a general truth of life. Not primarily that we become aware of a 'presence' around us and overshadowing us, so that we exclaim in the words of Tennyson's Higher Pantheism:

"Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands or feet."

This kind of immediacy is quasi-spatial. God is infinitely near us in space. But there is no revelation in that. He might be infinitely near to us and yet wholly unknown. The real immediacy is an immediacy of relation. In Christ we find God standing immediately related to us where from our side we stand fundamentally discontinuous with Him. The human now speaks of the divine, death of a new kind of life, man's end of a new beginning. Something new happens to man's consciousness wherein he learns that he has not to get to God by any exercise or extension of his own powers and faculties, but that God has come to him by the exercise of His powers and faculties. God's life is seen to be standing in the midst of man's death.

But this New Testament witness about Christ—that in him man discovers his immediacy to God receives further, deeper, and clearer articulation. We purposely

say articulation rather than exposition or development, because what immediately follows is substantial part of the witness itself, and no mere theoretical interpretation of it. The death and resurrection of Christ are brought into the closest relation with sin, justification and redemption. It is not merely that Christ died, but that he died unto *sin*, not merely that he rose, but that he rose unto *justification and righteousness*. That is to say, sin and death are brought into the closest and most organic connection. And the reason why they are so brought together, is that they both witness to that ultimate rational discontinuity between man and God of which we have spoken. Sin is that discontinuity manifesting itself in the moral sphere, as death is in the physical sphere. The New Testament will not allow any absolute distinction between physical and moral as over against the transcendent God. It is the whole man in the sum-total of his relationships in the world; the whole man, and that means the whole world of man, that stands in discontinuity with God. Death is the visible objective fact which marks and proclaims this discontinuity. It is the fact above all others, which brings it home to man's consciousness. Man falling out of his true relationship to reality, to God, falls into death. Man's world detached from its true ground in God falls into death.

The connection between sin and death can be described in no rational-causal terms. It is not that sin is the cause of death in the sense of a rationally discoverable principle of causality. One cannot link the two things together in any scientific or philosophical schematism. The connection exists not in the world as such, with its physical or historical sequences, but in the transcendent will of God. In that will discoverable only

in revelation, death is a significance, has an economy, and that significance and economy are in relation to sin.

It must be emphasized that we have to do throughout with a revelatory idea ; an idea, that is, which speaks not of what death is in isolation from the universal relations between God and man, not of what it is judged simply as a physical fact within the sphere of other physical facts, but of what it is in the field of those relationships between God and man in which man's real existence is grounded. The scientist abstracts death from the entire realm of significance. He treats of it simply as a thing in itself. To him it is the antithesis to life, and to life merely as a physical fact, as a mere datum, a mere object of enquiry, but not the antithesis to man, as a being who stands in relation to God. He speaks of what it means for life as a mere physical existence, not of what it means for man who is vastly more than a physical existence. Place death in relation to a mere thing called life, and it remains just a fact, the end of life ; but place it in relation to man, and man regarded as the subject of a relation between himself and God and as finding his true being in that relation, and it becomes not a mere fact but an immense significance.¹ It marks that discontinuity with reality, that breaking off of a contact which in the moral sphere is experienced as the sense of sin. It becomes the judgment on man's life. It is the external sign to him that he and his world are involved in a discontinuity with the absolutely and eternally real ; and it becomes the medium of bringing it home to him that the essence of this discontinuity can only be described as sin. Man is a fallen being, a being who belongs to a fallen world. The life-force that rules him and his world is shown as evil, as sin, in that it may be

¹ cf. Denney, *The Death of Christ*, pp. 282-290.

described also as a death-force, a force that ends in death. Death possesses not merely a physical, rational, significance ; its true nature is only seen when it is referred to the divine, the transcendent, the supra-temporal.

So, the witness runs, Christ not only died, he died unto sin. His death was not merely a fact of history, it was a significance, a great divine transcendental significance, it was a word of God to man. The fact of his death, merely as fact tells us nothing. Even though it be declared that he died heroically or sacrificially, as a martyr or truth lover, or as one who laid down his life for a cause, nothing is really said to us about God and His relation to us. On the plane of mere event, however moving the event may be, the death of Christ means simply what death in general means. But the event as word, as significance, and as Divine transcendental significance, as revealing and establishing that connection which exists in the will of of God between death and sin—that means something quite different. Here the death of Christ means an act of God, an entry of God Himself into the sphere of that supreme discontinuity of life which is sin. The death and resurrection of Christ seen not in their historical light, but in their transcendental revelatory light, mean forgiveness, justification, reconciliation. Death is made to be the medium of a new consciousness of God, the consciousness of His grace, His forgiveness. While on the rational plane it proclaims discontinuity, it is now made to speak of a new divine continuity, the continuity which is expressed in the words reconciliation and communion. In and through the death of Christ, man's general consciousness which is largely determined by the fact of death, is deepened into a new sin-consciousness. His sense that he is mortal is

deepened into the sense that he is a sinner. And in and through this new sin-consciousness man becomes aware of God as the God of grace. The death of Christ is seen to be God's provision for his salvation. Were it not for that death, he would never see the deep connection in the will of God between sin and death. He would never see, that is, that the last truth about himself as mortal man, is that he is a sinner. But inasmuch as he is made to see this truth through an act of God Himself, through an actual entry of God into the sphere of his sin and death, he awakens to the fact that he is the object of forgiveness and grace. Sin which rationally speaks of discontinuity and alienation now comes to speak of a new continuity and communion. He discovers the nearness of God, the nearness which is grace, in the very fact which rationally speaks of farness, that is, in the sense of sin.

Here again the idea of the Holy Spirit is part of the New Testament witness. Apart from that, we have to do merely with the historical influence and effect of the death of Christ upon the mind and hearts of men. We have simply a moving event in history, together with the subjective impressions which it makes upon us. But we have nothing which can be called revelation. Only if the link which binds us to this event, is not rational-casual, something in us, but transcendental, something in God, only if a supernatural illumination and a supernatural conviction are given us whereby we see the death of Christ not simply as fact but as significance, as word, are we in possession of revelation. We may express the matter crudely by saying that the prime effect of Christ's death was upon God and not upon us. It is not because it moves us, makes a subjective impression on us, as a deed of

heroism and martyrdom might do, that it becomes revelation. It is rather because it moves God, bringing down upon us His consciousness, His Holy Spirit, that we see it for what it is. The bond which unites us to the death of Christ is not human but divine, no mere human impression, but divine life and understanding made ours. A transcendental bond unites the forgiven sinner with the deed which is the source of his salvation, the death of Christ; no rational bond, since between death and life, sin and holiness there are no rational bonds. No rational explanation of the atonement is possible. Rationally it must for ever remain a mystery. But to faith its secret is disclosed, because faith is the work of the Holy Spirit, the transcendent, supra-temporal, supra-rational understanding, which links man's consciousness on to the deed of revelation.

There is yet another element in the New Testament witness of Jesus Christ which is rarely mentioned, but which is substantive part of that witness. It centres in that discontinuity in human life which is called chance or contingency. Man is a contingent being in the universe. He is born of the flesh, and in individual cases, of the lawless and unregulated impulses of the flesh. His very existence waits on contingency. A miscarriage in the womb, and the world, so far as we can see, would never have had a Plato, a Dante, or a Shakespeare. Man's life is shadowed by chance, accident and caprice. He is part of a system which stands in no rationally discoverable relations with his life-purposes. Certainly that is so with regard to the individual. The individual is subject to chance and accident, is indeed largely the product of chance and accident. The creation of which he forms a part

is subject to vanity. The sparrows fall to the ground apparently without meaning or purpose, and man in this respect is like the sparrows. One is taken and the other left, and even in the spiritual world this apparent chance and contingency hold. Now the antithesis to chance is choice and election. And the task of revelation is to make the fact of chance speak of choice and election. Is it possible for that which rationally speaks of chance to speak of choice? What great word will clothe chance with the significance of choice? Can chance itself become the material of revelation? Here our thought reaches its limits perhaps more quickly than anywhere else. But we cannot but be arrested by the intriguing emphasis laid on predestination and election in the New Testament witness. We note, to begin with, that there is set forth a man out of this contingent and incalculable world to be the subject of Divine Incarnation. The eternal and the transcendental assumes the form of the human, the contingent, the historical. In no general truth of reason it is said to us, in no universal law of life is revelation given, but in this man, at this time, in this place. Moreover, the believer, the object of redemption is chosen in Christ from before the foundation of the world. Rationally his existence as a believer is a thing of chance. It depends on the fact that he happens to stand in a temporal relation to the coming of Christ. But the real bond which unites him to Christ is not rational-temporal, but divine and supra-temporal; it cannot be expressed in terms of causality, but in terms of eternal will and purpose. The God Who comes as objective revelation, comes also as the bond which unites a man with that revelation. The eternal will which manifests itself on the plane of history as revela-

tion, enters also the field of man's consciousness and links his life on to that supreme manifestation. The relation of the believer to the Christ of revelation is the projection of an eternal relation between the Spirit and the Son in God. Incalculable harm has been done by the translation of the idea of election into a rational dogma. This dogma has been set forth in terms of an omnipotent will whose features have been drawn from some incalculable force acting arbitrarily like chance itself. Men have failed to perceive that election is the precise opposite of all chance and all contingency. A will acting arbitrarily is the highest expression of chance we know. Election in its true meaning is the guarantee of freedom not its subversion. It presupposes a response and not a fate. It involves a personal relation, personal in the highest degree because it is grounded in that personal relation which exists between the Spirit and the Son in God. Therefore it is the supreme sanction of freedom. Man's freedom is grounded in the freedom of God. The projection of an eternal and personal relationship existing in God, becomes the ground of the relation of the man of faith to the object of his faith. Revelation thus meets and lays hold of that element in human experience which we call chance. Inasmuch as it is seen to consist in no general and timeless idea but in a person and a deed arising out of this contingent world, inasmuch also as the eternal purpose lays hold of the individual in his contingent individual existence, chance is seen in a new light. Like death and sin, chance is the mark of a fallen world, a world in discontinuity with God.

We need to note, the idea of chance arises out of a deep experience of individuality. It is the individual that, as it were, stands out in chance; we discover that

on one side of our being we are not confronted by a universal law of necessity, but that there are, so to speak, individualised selections playing upon our life and constituting its determinations. As Baron von Hügel has pointed out, it is the contingent in our experience rather than the universal which moves the will, and thus constitutes the individual.¹ One may say that chance, contingency, is the raw material out of which individuality is woven. So the obverse of chance is election. Chance is, so to speak, the expression of election on its negative side corresponding to the circumstances of man's individual life in a world which is in discontinuity with God. Therefore it can be made to speak of choice; not rationally indeed, but in and through revelation, in and through the Holy Spirit. Just because it is individual, and cannot be thought of apart from the individual, just because it must always have reference to individualised happenings and experiences, it can point towards choice and election.

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And now to sum up; we have stated that the 'locale' of revelation in the New Testament is not the human, historical Jesus as such but the risen, exalted Lord, and that between these two there is from the rational point of view a discontinuity so absolute that it can only be expressed by the words death and resurrection. Our meaning throughout has been, that there was that hidden in Jesus of Nazareth which does not yield its secret to historical or rational enquiry, nor even to that sense of subjective sympathy and kinship with him, which is produced by the historical influence which

¹ cf. *The Mystical Element in Religion*, Vol. I, p. 3.

flows forth from his human life and personality. This secret which does not so yield itself is precisely that which makes him the revelation of God, the word of God directed upon those discontinuities of our life where the need for revelation arises. The significance of Christ's life and work is not comprehensible to man on his natural levels, it is in its true nature comprehensible to God alone, and to the men to whom God discloses it. How is it possible for man on his natural levels to see in Christ's death an atonement for sin? What natural, rational connection is there between a man's death and a radical dealing with the world's sin? How also is it possible for a man on such lines to see in the story of the resurrection, which is so vulnerable on the side of historical criticism, and which from the merely historical point of view can never be completely assured, the overcoming of death for the world, and the beginning of a new and eternal mode of existence? How is it possible from the historical episode of Jesus of Nazareth to discern one, who in his own experience and mission gathered up the contradictions and discontinuities of life, death and life, sin and righteousness, chance and choice and made the one side of the antithesis to have the promise and assurance of the other? How, in a word, is it possible for mere natural, rational man to discover in Jesus an actual coming of God into the midst of the contradictions of our life, into the midst of our death, our sin, our human contingency and chance?

It is no wonder that the historical critic is driven to drive a wedge between the Jesus of history and the Christ of Paul and John and the Christian Church, to declare that the latter is entirely different from the former, and to attribute the latter to the myth-making activity of man's mind? How can he do otherwise,

from the standpoint of history alone? To ordinary reason and understanding what can the Christ of revelation be, but a problem and an offence? How can he ever become the Christ of *revelation*? To meet the Christ of revelation, one must in some way come to share his risen life, the life in which the discontinuities of our human life are transcended and reconciled, one must know him, that is, after his transcendental mode of existence. But that is not a rational possibility. The possibility lies in God not in anything in us. Only if that movement from God to the world whose sign is Jesus Christ, be involved in a movement from God into the sphere of human consciousness, reason, and understanding, is it possible to see in Christ the revelation of God. There must be a divine movement towards and within the soul of man, answering to the divine moment in human history. In other words revelation demands the Holy Spirit for its receiving and understanding. What takes place outwardly on the plane of history, must take place inwardly within the sphere of consciousness; but take place not in a rational-causal way, as if history as such produced this inward result, it must take place from God. It is for that reason that the Holy Spirit becomes in the New Testament the principle of revelation. Christ cannot be known as the revelation of God save in and through the Holy Spirit. And it is in pointing to the Holy Spirit as the principle of revelation that the New Testament witness reaches its crown and climax.

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The final question that will arise, is that concerning the truth and validity of this New Testament witness.

Having tried to make the witness coherent and clear, we are faced with the question is it true, it is reliable? This question, it will be seen from the foregoing, is not capable of a direct and rationally-satisfying answer. Rational proof is out of the question where the subject-matter of revelation is not amenable to rational treatment. The only answer which we can give which at all approximates to a direct appeal to the reason is by way of another question, namely, what does revelation make of us? Does it make us real in our relation to the facts of our life and to the world in which we live? Does it speak truth about this life of ours in the world? Does it, that is to say, bring out into clear relief those discontinuities in which our life stands, reveal them as our true life-problem and set us in a real relation to them? Does it call in question the whole field of our knowledge on the ground that this knowledge in its search for unity and system ignores these discontinuities in the full weight of their significance for our lives? The contention of the Christian revelation is that its solution of the problem of our life, and that solution alone, reveals the problem in the whole range of its implications. Scepticism itself does not bring home these discontinuities of our life in the way that revelation does. To take one single example, it does not bring home to the man the sense of his sin and guilt. It passes that by. It does not make man *real* in relation to this supreme discontinuity of his life. Just because revelation does that, it accredits itself as more real than scepticism. Just because it deals with reality in a way that nothing else does, just because it opens our eyes to see that to which we were formerly blind or dull, just because it makes a man, a man of truth and reality, is it thereby validated as itself truth and reality.

But clearly that means that its truth is perceived in no mere objective and theoretical way, but in and through a fundamental decision of man's life. This truth is of such a nature, that it must *become* true by means of crisis and decision with the soul of man. It will be our aim in the following chapters to set out more fully the necessity and nature of this crisis, and to indicate its implications for thought and life.

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We cannot, however, bring this part of our discussion to an end without dealing with a criticism which is likely to arise in the mind of the reader, and which is often directed towards the theology which is founded on this estimate of the witness. It will be asked, does not the stress here laid on the radical discontinuity between God and man lead to sheer deism and dualism? This criticism has already been glanced at in the preceding chapter, but something more needs to be said about it here. Our contention is that precisely the opposite is the case, and this contention we must now strive to justify. And first let us recall what we said at the beginning, namely that Christ as God's revelation to us does not appear apart from a context. He stands in the midst of a history constituted for the revelation and redemption of God. That history is related to universal history, and related in no naturalistic way, but in and through the Divine will and election. And history itself is related to the natural world, the cosmos, which arises by the Divine creation and is sustained by the Divine providence in order to serve those ends which belong to the relations between God and man. There is a continuity reaching up from the lowest part

of the creation to the transcendent God Himself. But that continuity lies in the will of the transcendent God, it is the continuity of His creative and redemptive purpose. It is not a thing, a datum, which can be seen from below upwards; it can only be seen from above downwards. And here we may note certain analogies in our own experience which will help to make this view of the matter clearer. There is, we may venture to say, an original native bond between what we call nature and what we call mind or spirit. Nature is organic with spirit. But the examination of nature itself will not reveal to us this bond. Spirit belongs to another sphere of reality than nature, it manifests qualities and characteristics that are not to be found in nature. We do not seek the connection between the two in some principle equally present in nature and in spirit, some underlying unity of which both are parallel manifestations. That leads to a monism which virtually rules out the existence and reality of spirit, or to a form of realism which in the end becomes indistinguishable from materialism. We look for the connection in the destiny of nature to pass upward into spirit, to provide the conditions under which spirit can arise, a destiny which is revealed only in the realm of spirit. That is to say nature can be acted on creatively, and only when it is acted on creatively are its connections with the realm of spirit made really manifest. We can interpret nature to some degree at any rate from the standpoint of spirit, but we cannot read spirit from the standpoint of nature. From the standpoint of nature what we see is discontinuity, not continuity. This is not to say that the detached scientific study of nature must necessarily lead to materialism or mechanism. Everything that

truly is, points to and has connections with something that is higher ; but it is only within the sphere of the higher that these connections reveal themselves. Nature is constituted for spirit not because it is in itself a pale manifestation of spirit, but because only on the background of nature are spiritual realities made visible or so far as we can see made possible. Thus again what we call law, as natural norm, is prophetic of what we call freedom, not because law and freedom are lower and higher manifestations of the same thing, but because law is convertible into freedom, or rather is the indispensable condition of freedom, as in human action. So similarly process is prophetic of action, not because a process is in itself a diluted act, but because it can be so reacted upon that free activity will arise. Nature, law, process are so to speak the raw materials out of which creative spirit can fashion spiritual and free relationships. They receive a meaning and a value, a reality and a right, which in themselves and apart from their purpose and destiny they do not possess. Regarded in themselves and by themselves they are discontinuous with that spirit and that freedom with which nevertheless they are continuous in virtue of the fact that they can be acted upon creatively from above. Let it be understood, that in saying all this, we are not making any dogmatic pronouncement of a philosophical nature upon the nature of reality. We are but saying how things are in *our experience*, because we are seeking analogies in that experience which would help us to understand more clearly the nature of the relation between God and the world as it is set forth in the witness to revelation.

And now we may proceed to note that all these antitheses, nature and spirit, law and freedom, process

and action, point to an ultimate antithesis which the Bible announces with unfaltering voice, the antithesis between the world and man on the one hand and God on the other. Man is not God, and God is not man. Nevertheless man is made in the image of God in the sense that a destiny has been stamped upon his life. Man was made for God and only truly lives when he draws his life from God. In himself and by himself man is nothing. "Cease ye from man whose breath is in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of?" (Isaiah ii, 22). "All flesh is grass" (Isaiah xl, 6). But he becomes something as he takes his life from God, as he forswears all independence and autonomy and permits himself to be worked upon continually by the creative power of God. It is in and through this creative power of God that man gets for himself meaning, value, reality and right. It is as the Spirit of God works creatively upon him that he himself becomes soul and spirit. Always is the relation of God to man that of creativeness. Never does man stand related to God excepting in and through God's creativeness. A continual giving up of his own independent, autonomous existence, a continual standing in responsibility and responsiveness to One Who is other than himself, that is man's true life. The continuity between his life and the divine, is to be found not in some immanent nexus belonging to both, but in the nature and will of the divine life alone. Apart from that responsibility and responsiveness, and standing in independence and autonomy, man is discontinuous with God: not discontinuous in the sense that he can literally tear himself away from God, but in the sense that the divine creativeness turns to criticism and judgment even unto death. Not in himself, in anything that he is or has

simply as man, is he continuous with God. His very response to God is not some native faculty which he possesses, it is a response to divine creative action; personal, in the highest sense personal, but nevertheless something called forth by God's creativeness.

Now here the very ground of deism and dualism is cut away. How is it possible to speak of these when man's life is so absolutely conditioned by God, when God is left sole and sovereign, and man's life is determined creatively or critically, and both in the absolute sense, by God? Indeed we may turn our defence into a new offensive and declare that this view alone can effectively keep deism and dualism at bay. For where the world and man are allowed in their independence and autonomy a measure of divine right, our thought of God must at last either be in essence deistic or it must tend towards a philosophic absolutism which represents all the phases of human life and experience as aspects of the one absolute reality. But where God stands to man as creative throughout, where His creativeness turns to criticism and judgment upon man as he falls out of that responsibility and responsiveness in which his true life consists, deism and dualism on the one hand, and absolutism and pantheism on the other are completely done away.

CHAPTER III

THE RECEIVING OF REVELATION: FAITH AND THE HOLY SPIRIT

Part I

Revelation and the Holy Spirit

REVELATION, as we have seen, is according to the New Testament witness, the approach of reality to man, not the approach of man to reality. It is an actual coming of God into the sphere of man's life, and specifically into the sphere of those discontinuities, sin, death and contingency, which constitute his life-problem and proclaim the impotence and impossibility of his existence. ¹"The Bible is the Book in which the strange announcement, the ever-recurring theme is, that the God who has made the world and fills all things, holds all things in His hand, the omnipresent and almighty—comes. The coming of God is the peculiar theme of this book, and of this book alone." The divine life links itself on to our human death, the divine holiness links itself on to our human sin, the divine election and choice link themselves on to our human chance and contingency. This happens, this *becomes*, this is a great divine event in Jesus Christ, and this happening is the word of revelation. Humanity which is the sphere of sin, death, and chance, becomes united with divinity in the person of Christ. Two spheres which from the human and rational point of view are completely discontinuous meet and are made to coincide in the person of Christ.

God comes into the sphere of man's *death*. That is

¹ Brunner, *Der Mittler*, p. 254.

indicated by the death of Christ. The manhood of Jesus as it were retreats, yields itself wholly up to the God who enters the sphere of man's death. Jesus the man, the sharer and representative of our humanity dies. And he dies, not simply for reasons prescribed by historic circumstances, not merely as a hero dies, or a martyr, or the representative of a cause which is opposed and persecuted. He dies unto God. But since he dies unto God, he dies paradoxically unto life. ¹There is a death which is "the death of death." The humanity is not destroyed, nor does it merely lose itself in God as in an ocean of being, it is raised up, and set forth as the true humanity, the humanity which is according to the original creation of God. God comes into the sphere of man's *sin*. That also is indicated by the death of Christ. We have seen that sin and death are bound up together in the relation of man to God. The humanity of Jesus, just because it is our humanity, belongs to the "flesh of sin." It therefore yields itself wholly up to that God whose coming disqualifies it as such, yields itself up wholly to that judgment of God upon humanity which is called death. In the very doing of this, in the offering up of itself, in standing under the divine judgment, and in the fact that all this was the very life-movement of Jesus, there is revealed the essential sinlessness of the individual humanity of Jesus. In itself, as mere existence, as actual empiric humanity it was not sinless; it belonged to the "flesh of sin." But since the essential being of Christ consisted not in the expression of his actual humanity as a thing of positive excellence, but in renouncing it, in its self-emptying and becoming "obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross," the individual humanity

¹ See Barth, *Römerbrief*, p. 143.

of Jesus manifests its own sinlessness. It is only from this point of view that we can understand the sharp, decisive words, "Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is God." To interpret this saying as a mere expression of humility is to trifle with it. What sort of humility would it be, which would proclaim something that was not true? Only if our sinful humanity was united with divinity, only if the humanity of Jesus, as a mere existence and *per se* belonged to the "flesh of sin," and must therefore be delivered up, renounced, negated, can this saying be reconciled with the individual sinlessness of Jesus. Christ died unto sin. Therefore he rose for our justification. Therefore "of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" (1 Cor. i, 30).

Again, God came into the sphere of our *contingency*. The sign of that is the Incarnation, whereby a member of the human race, an historical man, becomes the object of God's eternal choice, for the purpose of His coming into the world and His performing of a great all-decisive deed in which our humanity is constituted afresh.

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Now that which responds to and receives revelation is faith. And faith as response to revelation means two things. It means of course believing that that of which we have spoken really happened in Jesus Christ, that there was this approach of God, this coming, this divine event. This happening is believed as objective divine deed and event. But clearly that in itself is insufficient. Revelation regarded simply as objective event is not yet truly revelation. How does it really

help me, simply to believe that this coming of God really happened in the case of Jesus Christ? Even supposing I could believe it in a purely objective way which of course I cannot, of what value would it be to me? Somehow I myself must be united with it, linked on to it. That a very wonderful thing happened to an individual member of the human race, tells me nothing about my life, its meaning and its destiny. It is only as I see in Christ *my* death linked on to the divine life, *my* sinful nature united with God's holy nature, *my* contingent existence laid hold of by the eternal will, that what happened in Christ becomes revelation for me. Humanity must be linked on to divinity in Christ—humanity, not simply one man's human nature—if revelation is to be spoken of. And faith must be not simply believing that in this one man these great things of which we have spoken happened; it must itself be an actual uniting of ourselves and our nature with what happened in the case of this one man. There must be a bond uniting the believer in his faith with the event which is the object of this faith. Only within its bond, only within this unity, can revelation be seen as revelation. Revelation in order to be revelation, cannot be objective merely, it must be subjective as well. Only in being subjective can it be seen as objective.

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But what is the nature of that bond between the individual believer in his faith and the revelation which is the object of his faith? We have seen that it cannot be the mere influence, impact and effect of the historical personality of Jesus. Apart from the fundamental criticism which we have launched against this view,

namely that it destroys revelation proper, it must surely be obvious that such a temporal, causal bond will weaken as time proceeds. The further off we stand in time from any great figure of the past, the fainter grows his direct influence upon us. Even those who interpret the matter after this fashion, are obliged to have recourse to the idea of the Holy Spirit to sustain and maintain the strength of this bond. But they leave this idea, as it were, in mid-air. They interpret the Spirit as somehow immanent in the idea for which Jesus stands and which he embodies. They do not bring the Spirit into any organic relation with the person of Christ or with that relation in which man stands to Him in faith. Or else they represent the matter as if the Spirit were some element which is common to God and man, in virtue of which man is able to receive the revelation given in Jesus Christ. They work with two presuppositions : first, an historical personality with its influence, impact, and effect on human consciousness ; and second, an original bond immanent in both God and man, the Spirit, whereby this influence is maintained and made effective. In other words, they presuppose what revelation in its New Testament sense denies, direct continuity between God and man. The Spirit comes to stand fundamentally for an idea of immanence, whereas in the New Testament He is purely transcendent. And faith becomes the expression of that which lies immanent in man's own nature under the stimulus of the impact of an historical life and personality.

But if the presupposition of the New Testament witness be valid, namely discontinuity, the bond can be nothing which is immanent in us. It cannot be interpreted simply as a rational, moral, or emotional

response to some outside stimulus. The rational idea of causality, as if the historical Jesus in the dynamic of his human personality were as such the cause of faith breaks down. We have to work with an idea which transcends that of historical causality. We have to seek a causality which is other than everything which usually passes under that name, a causality which transcends all natural, rational, and historical modes of working. And here we are brought face to face with the idea of election or predestination which in some form or other dominates the whole Biblical conception of the relation between God and man. "He hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world" (Eph. i, 4.). The cause of faith must be sought in the eternal will of God, but be it noted, and this is of the utmost importance, of God as *revealed*. That is to say, we are not to think of predestination as something which could be regarded in the abstract, used as a logical counter and made to yield logical and rational conclusions. Predestination is *God's* predestination, not simply predestination in itself. God's will is *God's* will, not simply what we call will absolutised. The idea of predestination is not one which derives its content from any rational conceptions of ours, it derives its content from revelation alone. Our ordinary, rational idea of it is that of a will working arbitrarily and coercively: but what has that to do with revelation? Arbitrariness is the very antithesis to all that we mean by revelation; it precludes and excludes revelation. Predestination means divine transcendent causality, and the substantive derives its whole content of meaning from the qualifying adjectives. A will acting arbitrarily and coercively is the highest and most absolute form of the causality which we know. There is

nothing transcendent about that ; it is just the carrying on and making absolute of that which lies within the field of our rational knowledge and experience. No, the will of God is something which lies within, and rises up from, those determinations which constitute *His own nature and being*. The relationships within the Divine being and which make God God, are the ground of the divine will. God's will is identical with His nature. The relations within His own being, inasmuch as these are personal relations, constitute the determinations of His will. For that very reason, the will is an eternal and unchangeable will, a will before the foundation of the world, a will removed from all contingency, a will transcending all that arises in time, and all that belongs to the causations and sequences of time, yet a will which is the last ground of all temporal happenings. And to refer faith to this divine, fore-ordained, and eternal will of God, to make that will the bond which unites the believer to the object of revelation, involves the position that those relations which exist within the divine being enter upon the field of time and history and man's consciousness. To try and think this out is, of course, madness. It all belongs to that divine coming, that movement of God to the world which constitutes revelation. To attempt to describe the 'how' of this, is impossible. But the position is involved that the relation which is set up between the believer and the object of revelation springs out of a relation which is immanent in God. We call it the relation between the Holy Spirit and the Son. The coming of the Son means also the coming of the Spirit. Revelation coming down objectively in the same act comes down subjectively. The relation between the Son and the Spirit is, as it were, made

human and temporal in the relation between Christ and the believer. We may put the matter thus, all the time realising that we know not truly what we say: the relations between God, Christ and man on the field of time and history, are the actualisations of the eternal relations immanent in God between Father, Son and Holy Spirit. God's eternal will choosing men from before the foundation of the world and choosing them "in Christ," thus not arbitrarily, but according to the determinations which constitute His nature and His being, means a kind of projection of these immanent relations into the field of time and men and history.¹

It needs to be emphasized that predestination does not mean the selection of a number of people for salvation and the rest for damnation according to the determination of an unknown and unknowable will. That idea does not belong to predestination proper. It is a rational idea, a rational inference where rational inferences are out of the question. The will of God is not unknown. It is made known in revelation. The determination is not an arbitrary determination which obviously could have no place in revelation. It is determination prescribed by, indeed identical with the relations within the divine nature, which just because they are such, are personal relations. And on that very account, it acts upon us not as numerical units but as persons—free, individual, responsible persons. Predestination has not to do with personal units, but with personal souls. Its aim is not to collect a number of units but to act by way of choice and rejection on persons. That is to say, it is in the very field of our personal reactions, personal choices, and decisions that

¹ See Appendix to chapter VII.

predestination works. And it works upon us both critically and creatively. In our actual empirical relationship to God which is that of alienation and discontinuity we are judged and condemned. But this very judgment and condemnation is itself, being the judgment and condemnation of God, creative activity. Predestination brings into crisis, condemnation, and new creation, that relation to God in which we actually and empirically stand. It presses in and presses down upon our life in its actual relation to God, rejecting us in that relation, and in rejecting us, choosing us for that relation for which we were destined according to the purpose that created us. But this rejection and choice imply responses from our side which are personal and free. Or rather we should say that they create these responses from our side. We may note that even in our ordinary experience, we encounter that which acts critically and creatively upon us. ¹A great poem for example will often have to create the very faculty of understanding and appreciating it. It does not merely submit itself to men's minds, it acts critically and creatively upon them. It modifies, reacts upon, works on their consciousness. In virtue of a certain spirit within it, it creates responses. The very attitudes which reject it, are in a measure created by it. These responses are free, yet they are created responses. And when we remember that the relation of God to man is always and in everything the relation of creator, we are enabled, not indeed clearly to see, but in a measure to understand that predestination and free response are not incompatible, but correlative. Personal reaction, personal response is the field in which the divine predestination works.

¹ See Forsyth, *The Work of Christ*, pp. 16-17.

The idea of predestination has given endless trouble to theology. It must always contain its problems and to discuss them here would take us too far afield. But the root of the trouble is mainly this, that predestination has been regarded as if it were human and rational causality made absolute. It has been only poorly perceived that predestination points to a mode of causality which is of a totally different kind from the rational, indeed it implies a complete break with it. It means, as we have said, that the ground of the relation between the believer in his faith and the object of that faith is to be found in God alone. The relation which is set up between a man and Christ and which we call faith springs out a relation immanent in the Eternal Godhead. It is the relation between the Spirit and the Son. A predestination which meant the absolutising of the causation which we know, would be a purely rational idea, and one entirely removed from revelation. A predestination acting like a fate on human life, making thus the relation between man and Christ an unfree and therefore less than a personal one, could have nothing to do with predestination in Christ. It would simply be determinism at its highest pitch, for arbitrary and coercive will is the worst form of determinism. For this reason Luther and Calvin gave warning against abstracting the idea of predestination and treating it rationally, though it cannot be said that they always kept in mind their own warning. But they very rightly inserted that it was a dangerous thing to think about predestination except "in Christ." Rational causality in all its forms, whether in that of logical process, or natural law, or coercive will, has this characteristic that it excludes freedom and is incapable of setting up a truly personal relation. It treats men as things, not

as persons; thus it does not truly *choose* them. Predestination is causality of a wholly other kind. So far from excluding freedom it implies it and creates it. Just because it sets up in human life a relation which has its ground in an eternal relation in God, a relation which is supremely personal, the relation between the Son and Spirit, it is the great charter and guarantee of freedom. The strange circumstance has often been remarked upon, that the idea of predestination which logically and rationally precludes freedom has in Christian history been the inspiration of free personality and the creator of free political and civic institutions. The explanation is probably to be found here. It is predestination which gives to the idea of a personal relationship with Christ its acutest meaning, and which therefore gives a new meaning and value to human personality. Obviously the human and rational idea of causality yields no relation which is truly personal. The time element which stretches between revelation as objective and revelation as subjective precludes a relation which is really personal; for what we have is the influence and effect of a personality, or the dynamic of an idea, not the meeting of person with person. Predestination transcends the time element and brings the believer and Christ really together. Of course the process whereby this eternal relation between the Spirit and the Son in God actualises itself in the relation of faith to its object is a mystery which is incapable of rational explanation. It is as much of a mystery as the process whereby the Eternal God becomes incarnate in an historical man. Certainly it uses historical effects as media, just as the divine act of revelation on its objective side used historical events and an historical personality as media. But in neither case have we to do

with the mere product of historical causality. The ground of the Incarnation lies in the eternal relationship between the Father and the Son; the ground of faith lies in the eternal relationship between the Spirit and the Son within the being of God.

We may reach this conclusion from a somewhat different side. Christ means the entrance into history of something that is new. In that which makes him Christ, the revelation of God, he is not continuous with history but discontinuous. He is in history but not of history. In him, history is lifted out of its temporal sequential setting and set in the light of the divine event of revelation. "Jesus the Christ means eternity in time, the Absolute within relativity, the fulfilment of time, the beginning of that which is above all temporal change, the *aion mellon*, the coming word of God and salvation."¹ In the light of revelation, history in general is seen to point beyond itself to a supreme, transcendent event, a crisis which is not simply a crisis in history, but *the crisis of history*. That event, just because it is transcendent, just because it is the crisis of history throws its light backwards as well as forwards and fixes the relation of past events and past persons to itself. It gathers up the past, as well as determining the future. Time as such, time as process, flow, sequence "stands still before it" (Barth). So Jesus is represented as saying to the Jews, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it and was glad" (John viii, 56). Since the crisis is not produced by history, but upon history, the relations established between what comes before and what comes after are not merely those of historical causality and sequence; they are relations which the crisis itself brings with it. In faith,

¹ Brunner, *The Word and the World*, p. 36.

therefore, the individual is lifted out of his mere time-relations and set in immediate personal relationship with the object of revelation. The relationship which unites a man with revelation is not a rational, human, causal, immanent one but a divine and a transcendent one. There is a relationship in God which corresponds with the relationship between faith and revelation, and which is its ground. It is that which the New Testament designates as the Holy Spirit.

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It is necessary to follow up this thought still a little further. In the New Testament the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of the Son and not merely the Spirit of the Father, because He is the Spirit of revelation and faith. The Son and the Spirit are brought so close together in the New Testament witness, that they are almost identified, at any rate, verbally. The classic instance is, of course, 2 Corinthians iii, 17: "Now the Lord is that Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." This apparent equivalence of the Son and the Spirit has led many to suppose that the idea of the Spirit is fundamentally superfluous, that the two terms Son and Spirit connote the same idea. Some have suggested that we might even drop the term Spirit, and speak simply of the risen and exalted Lord. But the Spirit is not the risen and exalted Lord, He is rather the "spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead" (Romans viii, 11). Jesus was "installed as Son of God with power by the Spirit of holiness when he was raised from the dead" (Romans i, 4. Moffatt's translation). The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Christ, because He is the Spirit of revela-

tion and faith : and specifically because He is the relation between the divinity and the humanity in the person of Christ. This relation, it must be insisted, is a personal relation. It is not as if two metaphysical or quasi-metaphysical substances, humanity and divinity, were joined together. What we have in Christ is the personal conflict, crisis, and overcoming of two life-movements ; the human, which is a movement towards death, sin and contingency, and the divine, which is a movement towards life, righteousness and eternal will and purpose. These personal life-movements remain distinct in themselves. They go on their separate and opposite ways. Only if between them there be another which brings them together, reveals them in and through one another, makes life to dwell under the form of death, righteousness under the form of sin, eternal will and purpose under the form of contingency and chance, can there be real incarnation, or real uniting together of divinity and humanity. God becomes man *in* Christ, *through* the Holy Spirit. It is indeed true that there is a bond between God and humanity by virtue of which Incarnation becomes possible, but that bond is no immanent nexus between the two, it is wholly transcendent and creative, it is a bond, a relationship, within the being of God : it is the Holy Spirit. Thus the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Christ, the personal life-movement which united the rationally disparate entities humanity and divinity within the person of Christ. Therefore the divine deed of the Incarnation involves also the sending of the Holy Spirit. Revelation on its objective side brings with it revelation on its subjective side.

The doctrine of the Holy Spirit is the coping-stone of the doctrines of revelation and faith. Apart from it, the whole structure lacks unity and coherence. Unless

there be a relationship in God which becomes in a measure actualised on the field of time; unless the relationship between the believer in his faith to Christ the object of his faith (a relationship which, be it repeated, is in the acutest sense personal) be the expression under the form of our human life of the relationship between the Spirit and the Son in God; we are left with nothing more than a dynamic human personality plus the historic effect, influence, impact of his life on our consciousness. Unless also the terms in which Christ be construed, are transcendent terms, terms which express the union of rational discontinuities and incompatables, and the terms which describe the believer's response and faith be equally transcendent terms, we may find much that is helpful and stimulating in Christ, but we shall not find what the New Testament means by revelation.

The doctrine of the Holy Spirit is superfluous and in the last resort meaningless, unless it be considered in relation to the New Testament conception of revelation as a whole, and be made the category for the explicating of revelation. Considered apart and in itself as a doctrine that can be treated independently, it yields nothing and leads nowhere. And it is because it has been to a large extent isolated and considered in itself, that thought about it has been so extraordinarily sterile. Men take it as an idea, and pursue the developments of the idea in scripture and in historical theology, and when they have done that, they leave the matter, for they can get no farther. Or they attempt to evaluate it psychologically and speak of it as the "expression of an experience"; and they thus inevitably come to the conclusion that it possesses only relative truth. It can be dissolved in the idea of the spirit of Jesus, meaning by that the subjective

temper, disposition, spiritual quality of the personality of Jesus, or in the conception of the risen and exalted Lord. It therefore falls away, for it becomes a mere duplication of what we have elsewhere and can express differently. There is no purpose served by retaining the doctrine if it means no more than these. But the doctrine of the Holy Spirit is not simply *a* doctrine of the Christian religion, it is *the* doctrine in which all doctrine culminates. It is the doctrine which makes the other doctrines really doctrines of *revelation*. Only from that point of view does discussion of it lead to fruitful results.

Part II

Revelation and the Nature of Faith

We are now in the position to deal more directly with the subject of faith, or the receiving of revelation. And the first thing that appears in the light of our foregoing treatment of the Holy Spirit as revelation on its subjective side, is that faith is a *miracle*, it is indeed *the* miracle of consciousness.

Faith is miracle. There is no way of abating the rigour of this truth and no way of dimming its glory. Faith is not the human, rational historical effect and result of the miracle of revelation. It is the deed and gift of God. It is the Holy Spirit as seen from the human side. Human factors and human activity are, as we shall see, involved in faith, but faith is not, in its essence, a human activity. The bond of faith which unites the believer to Christ is no human bond, but a divine transcendent

bond. To ground faith otherwise than in the Holy Spirit, to ground it in reason or what is called experience is to refer revelation to the world we know, to assert that man can get to God, to deny that it is necessary for Him to come to us. It is to make revelation an extension of reason or experience, something quantitatively and not qualitatively different from the human. Christianity is the revelation of the humanly and rationally impossible, made possible. It speaks of a love that "passeth knowledge," of a gift that is "unspeakable," of a way of God that is "unsearchable." It plants in the centre of things a Cross which is foolishness to the Greeks and a stumbling-block to the Jews. It tells of a foolishness of God that is wiser than men and a weakness of God that is stronger than men. All this is not antithetical trifling, or agitated paradox, it proclaims the sovereignty of revelation over reason, the great aggression against all human independence and autonomy. It indicates a kind of knowledge different not only in degree but in kind to all human knowledge, a kind of knowledge which disqualifies human knowledge for the purpose of revelation. There are, indeed, reasons for faith, but faith is not grounded in reason. There is certainly experience flowing from faith, but faith is not grounded in experience. Reason is indeed king in its own sphere, but that sphere is the sphere of the world of our common experience, it is not the sphere of God and revelation.

The world with which reason deals is, however, to be overcome, not primarily explained, but overcome and explained only in the light of its overcoming. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (1 John v, 4). We emasculate these words of all real vitality if we take them simply to mean that faith overcomes the spirit of worldliness. It is the

world, the cosmos, the creation, the sum-total of the facts and forces that enter into our consciousness, that has to be overcome. Revelation points to an end of the old world, and the beginning of a new, "new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (2 Peter iii, 13). It is a naïve assumption on the part of most thinkers and philosophers that knowledge of the world is, as such, knowledge of reality. That the world in its empiric actuality is to be looked on, in any real sense, as a contradiction, a fall, is an idea that is scarcely glanced at, much less treated seriously. But Christianity says precisely this. It declares that the world is to be overcome, is to pass away, that its 'telos' is death, that its truth is not in itself but beyond itself in that resurrection, that new world of God, which rises out of death. And the rational man who directs his attention to the explaining of the world has, as such, to renounce himself before revelation. Not that revelation invades his proper sphere, but that it proclaims that that sphere is relative, and must be overcome. Between the new consciousness of the man of faith, and the old consciousness of the man of reason and experience there is a discontinuity, a cleft which is rationally unbridgeable; a cleft which is so absolute that it can be expressed only in the terms death and resurrection. Man sees himself in a new light, a light which reveals in his world and his life antinomies which he did not truly perceive before. Reason itself indeed comes up against antinomies, for example, that between the theoretical and practical reason as revealed by Kant. It can, even as Kant did, catch sight of a radical evil in things which precludes system. Revelation, however, pushes these antinomies into the very centre of life, reveals their earnestness, shows them to be the pivot on which all

turns, makes clear the fact that they are not simply flaws in man's construction of reality, but breaches in life's very nature. The world itself in its empiric actuality and totality is to be overcome. Man himself has to be overcome, has to die that he may rise in his true and real humanity. Here and now, while his empiric humanity remains, he is not yet overcome. But the beginning of his overcoming takes place in his faith, that is, in his consciousness, his world of thought and feeling, of attitude and relation. In this realm occurs the crisis, the miracle, which is faith, or as seen from the divine side, the Holy Spirit. Faith is therefore miracle. It is man's consciousness, his thought-world, including in that term his volitional and emotional life as well as his mental life, being gathered up into crisis, a crisis which is not an activity of his own, but an activity of the Holy Spirit entering his consciousness. Faith therefore draws upon the whole activity of man's consciousness, what we have called his thought-world; but it draws upon it, not, so to speak, positively, but negatively. We mean this: it is not as if faith were itself the positive activity of his consciousness, the positive expression of it; it is rather from man's side the expression of his negativity, the yielding of himself up to that which gathers his consciousness up into crisis. In faith man becomes the subject of a great aggression upon his life, a great approach of God, which disqualifies his consciousness, his thought-world for purposes of revelation. Thus Kierkegaard was able to speak of faith as a 'pathos' or suffering, and Paul could speak of it as a 'death.'

It is, from the human side, that in consciousness which answers to the death of Christ; but on the divine, that which answers to his resurrection. When

we say that faith is miracle, we do not mean that is something wrought on mere inert passive material. We do not deny that man has his part to play in the event of faith. Clearly he is actively engaged in this event. To believe in revelation is the freest thing that a man can do, indeed it is thus that he attains true freedom. It is not as if man were acted upon by a mighty irresistible force, a great wind that drove him willy-nilly before it. The relation which faith sets up between man and God is a personal relation. The response which faith elicits is a personal response. In the miracle of faith man's activity is involved in such a way, that the whole man is brought into a new relation to God. In faith man expresses himself, not a part of himself but his very self. But he expresses himself, if we may put it so, in his negativity, because his being is, from the standpoint of revelation, a negativity. He renounces himself, abjures his independency, his autonomy, his claim to have life in himself. And he renounces himself, expresses himself in his negativity, because he is met by God in His revelation, in His Holy Spirit. His being is gathered up into a crisis, a great life-decision which is so absolute a crisis that it can only be described as death and resurrection. The crisis he does not himself create, for faith is not a crisis *in* his life, but a crisis *of* his life. In this crisis he delivers himself up, he expresses to the full his negativity, he becomes not his own but another's. This delivering of himself up is indeed as seen from the outside, a great *deed* on the part of man, an activity of his will. It is decision. But seen from the inside it is rather a 'suffering' as Kierkegaard said, even, as Paul said, 'a death.' But it is also a deliverance and a resurrection. Not every renunciation of self is faith, for not every renunciation is miracle. In faith the

antithesis between activity and passivity is transcended, because in faith the antithesis between freedom and constraint is transcended. In faith the 'I will' becomes identical with the 'I must.' The man of faith believes because he must, but that very 'must' becomes an expression of his freedom. We may reflect upon the fact that nowhere are we so conscious of our freedom as when we are carried forward by the great, high, spiritual constraints of life. These constraints often give us sore trouble. We are placed by them in strain and tension. We feel ourselves torn different ways. Our yielding to them is, as seen from the outside, a tremendous activity of the will, but in itself it is a renunciation, an abjuring of self, a delivering up of the will, a kind of death. Yet we find our true selves in yielding to them. So, in the acutest sense is it with faith. There the 'must' is of the most imperative, and therefore the 'will' is of the freest.¹ The miracle of faith is a paradox only because it is not realised that man, as he is in himself, is from the point of view of revelation, a negativity. His end, his 'telos,' the whole drift of his life, his empirical nature is death. This negativity is expressed and confessed in the miracle of faith. Man surrenders himself, and in surrendering himself finds his true being, for his true being is not, so to speak, a movement from himself outwards, but is a movement from without inwards. Faith is therefore what has been called a "totality act,"² the act of a man in his "unanalysable totality," but the positive side of that act, the miracle, the crisis and new creation is not man's act but God's. It is the Holy Spirit.

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¹ See Brunner, *The Word and the World*, p. 73.

² *Ibid.*, p. 72.

There is one misunderstanding likely to arise here, at which we may glance in passing. When we use terms like crisis, suffering, death, resurrection in speaking of faith, we do not mean that faith is necessarily attended by great emotional upheavals and convulsions in the experience of individuals. When we reflect upon our experience in general we discover that often the greatest and most fundamental changes in our consciousness, in our whole ways of thinking and willing and feeling, have taken place within us silently and imperceptibly, and even gradually. We have to distinguish between the nature of the change, and our own sensible experience of the change. The former can only be described as crisis, but the latter may often be described as process. So with faith. The divine act and the human response are, in their nature, not identical with what they are in man's sensible experience. Faith is not equivalent to the psychological experiences which attend it. These experiences are different with different individuals. In the case of a Paul, a Luther or a Wesley, they take the form of profound psychological disturbances, great emotional upheavals; but in the case of many another they may take the form of inner, hidden, gradual process and change. A crisis is not the less a crisis because it is not visible and sensible. Both in history and in individual experience the profoundest and most far-reaching happenings are often the most hidden from outside observation. Indeed we may say that faith is always a hidden thing, it is never identical with its psychological expressions and accompaniments. Moreover we have to remember that, as we have already said, faith is not a crisis *in* man's consciousness, it is the crisis *of* his consciousness. It is man's actual, empirical consciousness standing in crisis. It is never something

which a man just has, a datum in consciousness which can be explored and described in an objective way, it is a relation in which man stands. No objective investigation of consciousness itself will reveal its presence. It creates experience certainly, but it does not derive from experience. It is the state of all experience even the highest standing continually in crisis. It is for man always death and always resurrection.

Part III

Contrasted Conceptions of Faith

Now this view of faith which we have been attempting to describe, will perhaps become clearer if we contrast it with others which have been put forward. We may begin with the view given in orthodoxy and which finds its most consistent expression in the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church. According to this, revelation is built on a foundation of natural reason. Such truths as the being of God, the freedom of man's will, and the immortality of the soul may be demonstrated by the reason. Given these things, the idea that God has revealed Himself is declared to be rationally congruous with the conception of His nature which reason discloses. Having gone so far, we are invited to investigate the main facts alleged in the gospel tradition about Jesus Christ, which are put forward as the subject-matter of revelation. The life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the fact that he founded the Church, and endowed it with his own authority, are to be investigated as historical

propositions, and demonstrated or at least shown to be probable by purely historical means. Historical and rational enquiry are the indispensable preliminaries to faith. Not, of course, that every individual must engage in all this rational activity, but that the Church must appeal in these matters to the court of reason and historical enquiry.

Faith becomes founded on demonstrable fact to which a revelatory meaning or value is attached. And it is only when the fact is first established as fact, or at least demonstrated as probable, that revelation can arise. Faith has two distinct sides. First it involves rational enquiry and proof, and second it means accepting and believing a certain meaning or value attaching to the fact. This acceptance involves believing in truths which are in no sense rationally demonstrable, but which are believed purely on the ground that God has revealed them. It may also mean, as in Roman Catholicism, accepting certain alleged historical facts for which there is little or no historical evidence, for example the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary, but which God has revealed as having taken place, and which are congruous with that which does fall within the sphere of historical attestation. But all this truth and fact rest upon a foundation which is the object of definite rational and historical enquiry and demonstration. The resurrection, for example, can never become revelation, word of God to man, until it is first established as historical fact or at any rate as historical probability by historical proofs. The difficulties of this way of regarding the matter are so obvious that it is strange that anyone can be satisfied with it. Faith is committed to an unending and fruitless apologetic, for the fact can never be so attested as to eliminate all legitimate dubiety.

The fact never is proved, it always stands in need of proving. Nothing can really be done with it, it can never stand as pre-supposition, we can never begin with it, we have always, as it were, to reach it. Between man and revelation there lies something which has to be substantiated on rational or historical grounds. Never can revelation get right to man, never can man realise his immediacy to a present, acting, speaking God. We are speaking, of course, of the logical implications of the idea of revelation, as set out in orthodoxy. Orthodoxy is at bottom rationalism. Man's nature, his reason, his self-standing activity is always there in its own right as over against revelation. Revelation is but the completion of what reason has begun. The supernaturalism of which orthodoxy speaks is no real supernaturalism, it is but naturalism raised to a higher plane. There is no qualitative only a quantitative difference. The supernaturalism is expressed for faith in the idea of an infallible church which is continually in conflict with reason, because at one and the same time, it rests on a foundation of reason, and yet must seek to control reason. And the Holy Spirit in this connection becomes at the last logically, a mere supernatural datum called in arbitrarily to validate the decisions of the Church.

Faith in this view is just an extension, a prolongation of reason. There is no element in it of aggression on man. Man does not really yield himself, he just goes on in his own native strength as far as he can, and when he comes to a halt he is met by something which enables him to go further. Of a life-decision, a life-crisis in which the whole man is involved, involved in such a way that he is negated and disqualified for revelation, involved in such a complete and thorough way that the terms death and resurrection can alone describe the

event, this view of faith knows nothing. Faith here may be *a* miracle, but it is not *the* miracle, it is not the end of the old man in his thought-world so far as revelation is concerned, and the beginning of the new. The reason which belongs to faith is not a new kind of reason, the Holy Spirit, but simply the enlargement and extension of the old.

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Very much the same kind of criticism might be applied to the conceptions of faith which we find in idealistic philosophy and modern religious liberalism. In Kant, for example, faith is a kind of accompaniment of the practical reason. The moral law in man, the categorical imperative 'thou shalt' postulates God, freedom and immortality. Belief in God is by way of an inference from the moral law, the categorical imperative. God is the guarantee, the confirmation, the validation of something which belongs to the nature of man as such. Faith here also is but the extension, the prolongation of reason. There is in it no element of miracle, no Holy Spirit. Moreover, God is given only as an idea. What meets experience is not God, but the categorical imperative, that is, impersonal law. There is no personal relation in faith, neither is there in this philosophy any room for revelation understood as we have understood it, as an approach of reality to man. Man himself reaches God, through his practical reason, and yet he does not reach Him; all he reaches is the *idea* of God. He never awakens to his immediacy to God, for God is never immediate, He lies far on the outside of man's life as the mere guarantee of the moral law. The bond which unites the man of faith to God is never a personal

bond, only a logical one. There is, we repeat, no Holy Spirit.

The case is very little different if we treat faith with Ritschl and many modern idealists as a mode of valuation. Values are things, and they are our creation. The evaluating of phenomena is an independent, autonomous act of the thinking being. When I evaluate, I am acting from my own centre. No personal relation is set up between me and God, no personal bond unites me to God. Here once more there is no Holy Spirit. God becomes a name which is given to abstract qualities.

Another significance is given to faith by Troeltsch who regards it as a principle of rationalisation. In his thought, there is a transcendent principle in reason itself, whereby reason perceives transcendence in the universe and therefore comes upon God. But here God stands in essential continuity with man, He is not placed over those vast discontinuities which constitute the human problem. There is no approach of reality to man, no thought of a world to be overcome, and in consequence no Incarnation and no Holy Spirit.

But faith may perhaps be thought of under the category of inspiration, as something akin to the poet's insight or the artist's intuition. This is akin to Schleiermacher's idea of faith as pure feeling. Inspiration, however, in that sense, simply means that man's own nature is roused to a high degree of self-expression. The powers and forces latent in human nature are summoned forth. There is no aggression upon man, no crisis, no life-decision, no new relation entering his life; man is simply dilated and augmented. So far from being overcome, man is thereby increased. Nothing new happens to man, he simply expresses himself in a larger and fuller way.

In none of these conceptions of faith, is the Holy Spirit treated seriously. And just because He is not treated seriously, faith does not become a truly personal thing, a personal relation to God. God is not immediately given in these conceptions, he remains simply an idea, a principle, or an experience.

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But though faith is neither postulation, valuation, rationalisation, nor inspiration, it contains all these, and leads to all these. That is to say it creates a new thought-world, which though in no rational continuity with the thought-world arising out of man's own native consciousness, establishes with it a continuity of its own.

For example, by way of postulation, it demands a world to be overcome, or to put it into the language of the old theology a fallen world. This view of the world as a fall, a contradiction, something to be overcome, in no way involves the abrogation of a scientific construction of the world-order. The scientific conception of evolution is not denied, so long as that conception is not made final and absolute. The evolution is that of a world in contradiction, a world to be overcome. Both terms 'fall' and 'evolution' are only symbolical. They describe the world from different points of view. Evolution expresses the time-view of the world, the world in which time is a necessary ingredient. Seen from this point of view the world is a process of ever increasing complexity and differentiation. The pre-supposition of evolution is continuity. But the world as continuity is only an aspect, only an abstraction from the actual world of experience, right and necessary of course in its place, but not exhaustive and

not final. 'Fall' expresses a view of the world from above and beyond time. Its pre-supposition is discontinuity and an ever-widening discontinuity. The higher creation ascends in the evolutionary process, the sharper grows its discontinuity with God: for in man, who stands at the highest point of evolution, this discontinuity becomes realised and expressed as sin. ¹Dr. Tennant has urged that unless a relative independence or autonomy is assigned to the world, it becomes impossible "to find even a partial and proximate solution of the problem set by the existence of evil in God's world." The world can then be estimated from the side of its independence, its autonomy, and from that point of view it can be described scientifically, as evolution. But inasmuch as this independence is not final, and inasmuch further as it is necessary pre-supposition for the existence of evil, such scientific description is only relatively true. From the standpoint of God, the world must be described as fall. That in the form in which it now exists, this autonomy of the world is the basis of evil, is, to say the least, indicated by the fact that it articulates itself in man's consciousness as sin. Sin is the supreme autonomy, it is man's assertion of his independence as over against God. It is that point where the autonomy of the world widens out into definite contradiction. Sin cannot be isolated from the context of general evil in the world. Truly it is not to be interpreted simply in terms of this, for sin has a qualitative distinction of its own as over against evil in general. But its connections with general evil are undeniable. Faith therefore both disqualifies and at the same time leaves room for the scientific description of the world as evolution. In postulating a fallen world, a world to be overcome, it

¹ See *Miracle, Its Philosophical Pre-suppositions*, p. 49.

leaves room for rational and scientific description and at the same time makes such description relative only.

But faith not only involves postulation, it does justice also to Troeltsch's idea of rationalisation. It brings with it a new rationality, the mind of the Spirit. Because it is really transcendent reason, it discovers in the world, not only an immanent ground but a sovereign Lord. Troeltsch's reason does not lead to true transcendence. The God whom it discovers is the ground of the world, its immanent reason, rather than the Lord of the world. Faith draws all its conceptions of the ground of the world from the idea of a great lordship over the world. It creates a real theology which, though in regard to its formulations in definite propositions, it is doubtless open continually to rational criticism, brings the whole of man's rational thinking under a supreme criticism and judgment.

Furthermore faith brings a new system of values, because it brings into life a principle of perfection. The life of faith, being the Holy Spirit within man's consciousness is a life grounded in perfection. Professor Alexander in his Gifford lectures entitled *Space, Time and Deity* has criticised the idea of God as the supreme value, the *Valor Valorum*.¹ He shows that value is always a relative idea, and that however high value ascends it never reaches the Absolute. Deity, he argues, belongs to the order of perfection, but, he goes on to say, it is on the side of values. Value belongs to the finite, relative order of existence, it implies the existence of unvalue. But God is infinite and absolute, and therefore value cannot be predicated of him, only perfection; "there is no unvalue with which He can be contrasted."² Alexander's conception of God and His relation to the

¹ See Book IV, chapter iii.

² *Ibid.*, p. 410.

world is very different from the one which rules our discussion. But his criticism of the application of the idea of value to God is sound and valuable. Value, he says, appears in proportion as deity expresses the movement of the world. We may therefore, from our point of view, say that faith, or the Holy Spirit, brings into life a new principle of valuation. Faith is not itself a valuation. As Holy Spirit it grounds life in perfection. Thus it becomes in the New Testament the principle of justification. Man is justified by faith; perfection is given to man in his faith. In faith though not in empirical actuality man attains perfection. But in empiric actuality, through the grounding of his life in perfection through faith, a new world of values appears. "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith (that is, fidelity), meekness, temperance" (Galatians v, 22).

Yet once more faith brings with it inspiration, a new vitality. It does this because it unites a man with the risen exalted Christ, the Christ of the new transcendent life. This new vitality makes itself felt within the old life of the empirical consciousness. The believer "tastes the powers of the world to come," because he is made "partaker of the Holy Ghost" (Hebrews vi, 5 and 4). There are gifts of the Spirit arising out of this new creative vitality; an inspirational life which manifests itself in a rich harmony of gifts and services within the fellowship of believers.

Finally the truth for which orthodoxy stands is upheld and maintained. Orthodoxy strives after a synthesis of reason and authority, but never really reaches this synthesis. It lays reason and authority side by side, and leaves them essentially unreconciled. Faith, however, in bringing a new reason, which both validates

the old while asserting its relativity, effects the needed synthesis.

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There is one further consideration to be addressed in treating of faith as miracle, as the Holy Spirit. Inasmuch as miracle without is met by miracle within, the Holy Spirit becomes the category for the interpretation of outward, objective revelation. To put it otherwise, an examination of the new consciousness which arises in faith will indicate the nature and meaning of the objective events of revelation which take place on the plane of history. But here we must guard ourselves against a serious misunderstanding. It is not meant that an examination of what is called Christian experience, undertaken after a psychological manner will lead to a true conception of objective revelation. That would indeed be to make a handsome present to the psychologist. No impartial, detached, scientific examination of Christian experience, where that experience is treated as an object, a datum for scientific investigation is in our thought. What we mean is that the nature of the miracle within will supply the terms for the interpretation of the nature of the miracle without. To put it otherwise: what stands over against us in our faith is a record of objective facts and interpretations, which are declared to be connected in some way with the divine transcendent deed of revelation. Of that record the Holy Spirit will be the supreme critic and judge—the Holy Spirit, and not mere rational and historical enquiry. There is a methodology of the Spirit. Man's new consciousness in faith will discriminate within the material offered, will discern what is of revelation and what is not. The Holy Spirit is as Dr. Forsyth used

to say "the Highest Critic." "He that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man" (1 Cor. ii, 15). Nothing can be integral to revelation without which is not integral to revelation within, for revelation merely without is not yet revelation. Nothing can be of revelation which does not enter into faith. There can be nothing in revelation that has to be accepted on the ground of external authority alone. Revelation to *be* revelation must enter into faith. It must find a response within if it is to be validated as genuine revelation. All that takes place without, takes place in its appropriate form within. To demand of faith that it should accept as revelation what in no sense happens within the new consciousness of the Holy Spirit, is illegitimate. Revelation to put it in a word, must become *we*. If this had been realised and understood, how much perplexity and indeed tragedy would have been avoided! Men have claimed that the believer should give assent to a multitude of propositions which could never become part of his own consciousness. They have demanded that a multitude of alleged historical facts should be received, which are incapable of becoming present spiritual fact. No fact, merely as fact, is or can be revelation. Only if the past fact be capable of becoming present, spiritual truth and reality of consciousness—that new consciousness which we call faith or the Holy Spirit—is it a fact of revelation.

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*Part IV**Wider aspects of the Spirit's Work in Faith and Life*

In concluding this chapter it is necessary briefly to glance at some of the wider aspects of the Spirit's work in faith and life, particularly in relation to certain criticisms which are often brought against the line of thought which we have been pursuing. And first it will be urged that our view involves an undue narrowing and restricting of the work of the Holy Spirit, that it confines His activities to the supernatural region, and leaves no room for His operations in the general field of man's history, life and culture. Is there no activity of the Holy Spirit, it will be asked, in the progress of men and peoples, in the discoveries of science and the progress of thought, in the expressions of music, art and poetry and in the moral life of man? Is not the spirit of man as it manifests itself in all these varied activities and energies in a very real sense a revelation of the Spirit of God?

Now here we need to recall what was urged in a previous chapter about the Holy Spirit as the Creator Spirit, the true nexus between God and the world, a nexus, however, which can only be seen from the side of God. And we need moreover to remember that the new man and the new world that arise in faith are not an entirely other man and other world from the old, but the old restored to their true meaning and their divine definition. Accordingly man's activity in the expression of the life-forces within him, and especially as that activity expresses the character of creativeness, discloses traces of its divine origin and its destiny. The perfect

world of God would be a world in which the divine creativity was fully expressed and manifested ; and that would become evident supremely in the mind and life of man. Therefore everything in man's life which expresses creativity is a witness to the reality of the Spirit of God. We may in no way equate man's activities, even those which belong to his higher nature, with the activity of the Holy Spirit. On the whole the historic and cultural life of man discloses a gulf and a contradiction between our spirits and the divine Spirit. As knowledge increases, culture develops, and history evolves, that contradiction becomes more painful and more acute. Progress in civilisation, says Dr. Forsyth, means regress in the fear of God. Advance in self-expression, and all culture is self-expression, leads to man's deification of his own mind and spirit. That civilisation and culture need not simply to be approved and vindicated, but continually to be called in question, is hardly likely to be denied to-day. But in the light of revelation we perceive that man's life is destined, is eternally predestined, for fellowship with God, indeed for a place within those divine relationships which belong to God's own being. That predestination holds. It is not destroyed by man's sin and fall. All man's attempts, therefore, to express and unify his life derive their meaning and their value from this divine predestination. Indeed they arise because this predestination holds. God is still related to the world through His Holy Spirit. He has not withdrawn His Spirit entirely from those relationships in which man's life stands. Faith and the Holy Spirit just because they bring man's life into crisis, do not simply deny it, they affirm it as well. Since the creation remains God's creation even in its fall and sin, it is not simply destroyed and another

put in its place, it is restored and thus in a real sense validated. In the expression of its life it carries a promise and witnesses to a destiny. The Holy Spirit is not an intruder into the realm of man's spirit, an intruder that simply brushes aside all the achievements of that spirit. But neither on the other hand is He simply an immanence, so that the expressing of that spirit can be identified with His workings. He is the divine ground understood as the divine destiny of that spirit, so that He ever acts upon it critically and creatively, and creatively because critically. There is therefore a meaning, a divine predestined meaning for all the activities of man's spirit, and because of this divine predestined meaning there are higher and lower activities and expressions of that spirit. Just because the Holy Spirit is at work in our life, we and our spirits work. But nowhere can we draw a clean line of continuity between the working of the Spirit and that of our spirits. The continuity is a continuity of crisis and for that very reason it is a continuity of ever new creation.

But there is a criticism of our point of view which is more directly concerned with the question of ethics. Are we not in danger, it may be asked, of separating the working of the Spirit from the moral life of man? Or even if it be granted that this supposed separation rests upon a misunderstanding, what positive guidance do we derive in relation to the problems and perplexities of man's moral life? What, in point of fact are the ethical implications of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit? Now it may be pointed out first of all, that it is precisely in man's moral consciousness that the element of crisis is specially present. Indeed ethics is in its very nature crisis. In the region of morals man never simply

expresses himself. He always recognises himself as in some sense under judgment. Whenever we hear a command, whenever even we hear an exhortation, we hear a judgment passed upon us. This command and this exhortation mean that simply in the expression of our life we are against the righteousness of God. Were that not so, they would be superfluous. Now it is just because the Holy Spirit brings our whole existence under crisis, denies and negates it in its empirical actuality, that He opens up the way to an unending moral development. New moral insights, understandings and aspirations arise through that crisis in which we continually stand. A higher kind of ethic than that which belongs to generally accepted ethic becomes continually a possibility. There is an obedience which is not merely the keeping of the law, but which is an obedience unto sanctification, unto divine perfection. The road to that sanctification is an infinite road. Moreover from this point of view the moral question is kept always close to the actual, concrete situations of life. It never loses actuality by wandering off into an impractical and delusive idealism which is based upon a theoretical and abstract interpretation of the world and the nature of man. Ethic remains fundamentally an obedience and not an idealism. Every law, and every institution which arises from the crisis which takes place in the mind and consciousness of man through the conflict between desire and duty receives at least a relative justification and validation. And yet the law and the institution must not be taken as final; they must pass under a higher criticism and judgment in that their observance produces fresh complications in which the crisis between desire and duty lifts itself in a new form. Thus, the state and the institution of marriage, to give

two examples, receive a very definite if relative validation. They are not to be set aside, but upheld. Never can they be left behind in the interests of any abstract freedom supposed to inhere in man's personality. They arise out of that crisis in which a limit and a judgment are set to the mere expression of man's natural instincts, appetites and desires. They present loyalties which are not mere expressions of man's nature but which are addressed to that nature. But within these loyalties there arise fresh complications which can in no wise be solved by abolishing these institutions and setting up new ones, complications for which no law in itself is a solution. So similarly we might deal with law in its juridic form. It is not to be set aside in favour of any *a priori* instinct of freedom or love. It arises out of the crisis between duty and desire which belongs to man's moral consciousness. Nevertheless within the region of law arise new complications and new crises. Law precludes forgiveness, restrains love, limits spiritual freedom. No new law will cope with this situation in any final way. The situation permits of being solved only bit by bit under the tension of new crises. Never do we reach a point where problem and crisis cease. Indeed the further we advance the more does such crisis become itself the law of our life. This no doubt is our condemnation inasmuch as it reveals the fact that an original sin inheres in our very nature as moral responsible beings; but it is also our hope. At the last we take refuge not in our moral achievements but in the mercy of God alone. We perceive at every step of our moral way that we are under judgment, indeed under condemnation, that the righteousness of man is never identical with the righteousness of God. But that very perception leads us out far beyond the

morality of law and institution and prescription and plants our feet on the road of an ethic which leads to sanctification. While we can never leave law behind us, while we can never supplant it by a pure ethic of freedom and of love in which law finds no place, we do decisively abandon law as the solution of our moral problem. The right of law as seen in the light of the Spirit consists in the fact that it stands for crisis and judgment. Thus it points to a kind of ethic which of itself it is unable to realise, for the answer to crisis and judgment as revealed in and through the Holy Spirit cannot possibly be law, it can only be forgiveness; that is, it can only be the assigning of God's righteousness to man by deed of grace and mercy. Thus as over against the morality of law, there is a morality of love which takes its rise in forgiveness and whose nature is to bring law to an end. But here and now law cannot be brought to an end, for it is the indispensable condition of there being any forgiveness at all. Thus in this tension between law and forgiveness which is capable of no theoretical solution, because it arises in definite concrete situations each of which gives its own peculiar character to the tension, the moral road becomes a road of infinite advance, and moral obedience becomes an obedience unto sanctification. Thus man becomes a moral personality, for his task is not simply to conform to a law or even pursue an idealism, but in every concrete situation that confronts him to form a judgment and make an act of obedience. He becomes truly responsible and his ethical development means growth in responsibility. We may add from this point of view that the Church of faith and the Holy Spirit, in virtue of being such, is set up to be the moral leader and guide of society; not in the sense that it possesses any theoretical solution of

the moral problems and complications of life, but in the sense that it continually brings into the world a tension and a ferment which is the condition of the constantly present possibility and the constantly pressing urgency of a new and further step onward in moral advance.

Along such lines as these, sketchily as they have been indicated, must we seek to draw out the ethical implications of the doctrine of the Spirit. They hold more promise than does that constant preoccupation with the question of moral values which bulks so largely in ethical discussion to-day. This preoccupation with moral values tends to put man at the centre of things. The values are his, and they are there to augment his life. They are in danger of involving him in a new kind of legalism and also of transplanting him into a region of theoretical idealism remote from the concrete situations of life. The ethical implications of the doctrine of the Spirit keep him close to these situations. He does not possess a grandiose problem which loses the sense of the situation here and now. Just because his moral consciousness is ever bound up with crisis and decision he is kept close to the problem where it stands at the moment. But also, inasmuch as he knows that perfection is never actually here, but always yonder, that between the righteousness of God and the righteousness of man, there is not only distance which might be covered from man's side, but judgment and crisis which can only be overcome from God's, he is kept from resting in any legalism however subtle and refined, from any resting in the idea that moral effort and moral achievement can as such bring salvation.

But now a further criticism of the position outlined in this chapter calls for notice. It will perhaps be objected that our conception of the Holy Spirit is too individual-

istic, that it fails to do justice to the social aspects of His working and specially His working in the Church, the Spirit-filled community, which occupies so large a place in the thought of the New Testament. In part, what has already been said will serve as an answer to this criticism, but something further needs to be added. And first, it must be insisted on that faith, or the Holy Spirit as seen from the human side, is an absolutely and intensely personal thing. There cannot be mass faith. There cannot be, in a strict use of words, corporate faith. There can be corporate witness, corporate confession, corporate activity, but not corporate faith. Always it is the individual, personal man standing in the relation of faith. Indeed it is only in faith that the individual becomes a person. Just because faith relates a man to God Who is in no sense identical with the world, just because the coming of God in revelation means crisis and new creation in regard to all life's relationships, faith must be intrinsically individual. In faith, man stands out as it were from his world and from all the relationships which constitute his life, and becomes himself and no other. In faith he is selected and newly related as an individual and a person. But having insisted on this, we pass on to note that it is only in faith, only in the Holy Spirit, that the true nature of man as a person is declared. The essence of man's person is responsibility. He is a person in that he is a being who is answerable for his life. He has to meet claims, to make decisions, to pass under judgment. He is a person, therefore, precisely in those aspects of his being which bring him into the closest and most vital relations with his fellows. He is a person precisely in and through the fact that he is a real builder of society. He is much more than a social animal, he is a social creator.

What makes man a real person in the very act sets up a real society. Thus faith in which man becomes uniquely a person is the true social bond, and the Holy Spirit in the very act of creating faith sets up the Church. Of course, if faith be regarded simply as an experience, something which a man just possesses and enjoys, the Church is but a secondary consideration. It plays its part of course in communicating to a man the message of revelation, and it may be useful as serving to enrich and augment his experience. Its value, however, remains instrumental merely. But inasmuch as the Holy Spirit meets man precisely in the region where his person truly arises, in the region of responsibility, inasmuch as He brings him to a point of crisis precisely there, He drives him to his fellows in a new way, creates a new social consciousness, and a new society the Church. Faith cannot work, cannot express itself save through love, that kind of love which is no mere natural feeling or instinct, but a new supernatural bond of union between man and man. Thus the Church becomes the field in which the Spirit works, the region in which the gifts of the Spirit are manifested and exercised. The Church is no creator of faith, no ark of salvation. God alone is the creator of faith. But in being this through His Holy Spirit, He sets up a community of believing people, which is no mere voluntary association of the like-minded for their mutual advantage, but the society in and through which alone, man as a person, a responsible being, can express and fulfil his true life.

We must, moreover, recall the fact that revelation means a real coming of God to the world. It is not an inner mystic illumination granted to individual souls. It is therefore in that sense historical, and the word of it can only reach us through the witness and confession

of a concrete institution and society. That society, therefore, lays its claim upon every individual to whom the word has come, to make his contribution to the witness and confession by which alone that word can be propagated. Just because it is a case of a word addressed *to* man, a word moreover which cannot be heard simply once, but which must ever be heard anew, the Church is bound up vitally and organically with the faith and life of every believer.

CHAPTER IV

THE SPIRIT AND MIRACLE

It is but a commonplace to observe that a great change has passed over the conception of the place of miracle in revelation in comparatively recent years. For long, miracles were regarded as among the outstanding proofs of revelation. The argument from miracle together with the argument for prophecy was the chief stock-in-trade of the Christian apologist. It was not perceived that revelation by its very nature precludes such proof. For to prove revelation presupposes that it can be regarded from the point of view of pure objectivity, that it is a datum which can be approached from the outside, and validated on merely rational and historical grounds. But revelation is not really revelation until it becomes so. It is not revelation until it becomes not only objective but subjective as well. The fact without cannot be seen in its nature as revelation until it becomes fact within. The old apologetic forgot, in this connection, the Holy Spirit.

To-day, however, miracle so far from being regarded as a support to faith, has become rather a difficulty and a stumbling-block. The causes that have contributed to this state of things are well known, but they will bear a brief mention, and a brief passing examination. First of all, there was of course the scientific difficulty. Miracle seemed to conflict with scientific law. But in surrendering to the idea of a world ruled by universal law, men forgot not only, as we shall argue more fully later on, that they were surrendering to an illegitimate infringement of science on philosophical territory; they forgot something more fundamental. They

forgot the presupposition of revelation, namely that the world is a world to be *overcome*. They assumed a self-standing world, a world standing, as it were, in its own right, to which revelation must accommodate itself. They assumed that the world in its empiric actuality must be the standard of reference for revelation. They forgot that revelation by its very nature cannot concede the autonomy of science in its full and absolute sense, because it cannot concede the absolute autonomy of the world which science investigates.

But not only was there the scientific difficulty, there was the historical and critical difficulty, the difficulty that arose from the side of historical criticism of the gospel records. This seemed to place the New Testament miracles in doubt. But here again too quick a capitulation was made. It was overlooked that revelation proper is not discoverable by mere objective historical enquiry. It is not something that appears sheer on the plane of historical investigation. It can be perceived by faith and faith alone. It presupposes a new kind of understanding, the mind of the Spirit. To eliminate miracle merely on the ground of historical criticism is again to forget the Holy Spirit.

We can pass over the philosophical objections to miracle, not because these are not important, but because in the main they find their ground of objection in that rational dualism of the natural and supernatural which real miracle involves. This dualism is, however, the express assertion of revelation; indeed we may say that it is the very thing which revelation reveals. Not in rational continuity between the world and God, but in the sharpest discontinuity from the rational point of view, in such discontinuity as can only be expressed by the words death and resurrection does revelation

manifest itself. Once more the Holy Spirit is left out of account—the Holy Spirit Who is the real unity between God and the world, a unity which, however, is no immanent nexus common to both, but a transcendent reality belonging to God alone, and in Whom therefore the rationally incompatible and irreconcilable are harmonised and unified.

But belief in miracle has also to encounter a specifically religious objection. It is felt that religion is an essentially inward and spiritual thing, the response of man's spirit to the Spirit of God; that spiritual truths must be spiritually discerned; that they are eternal and ever-present truths which authenticate themselves immediately to the soul; that they are therefore not dependent on past facts, but belong to a realm of reality to which miracle, understood in any sense as external event is irrelevant, and in which it is an intrusion and an offence. But here the whole nature of revelation as definite event in history (though not discoverable as revelation by historical investigation as such) is ignored. It is forgotten or denied that revelation means a real coming of God to man, a real approach from God's side to the world, that it is divine event and therefore that it is historical. It is assumed that there is direct unmediated access to God in revelation, that God and man stand in a relation of essentially unbroken continuity. It is forgotten also, that the event of revelation is a cosmic event, that the Kingdom of God is the consummation of nature and history, that man with his spiritual nature as well as his physical, stands confronted by God in revelation and not continuous with Him. Here once more the Holy Spirit as the transcendent bond uniting man to God in revelation, is displaced by the Spirit as the immanent nexus between man and God.

Our criticism therefore both of the old defence of miracle as proof of revelation, and of the modern difficulty and dislike of miracle, for scientific, historical, philosophical and religious reasons, is essentially one and the same; namely, that in both cases, the New Testament conception of the Holy Spirit is set on one side. It is that criticism which we must now follow up, with the aim of reaching thereby a new conception of the nature and place of miracle in revelation.

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The discussion of the idea of miracle, like that of the Holy Spirit of which it forms a part, has suffered from the fact that it has been treated largely in isolation from revelation as a whole. It has become to a great extent a theme in itself, standing in need of independent justification. It is true that reference is often made to the congruity of the idea of miracle with that conception of God for which revelation stands. Given the conception of God which appears in Christianity, and, it is argued, miracles are probable, and perhaps inevitable. The earlier position, which we have already noted, that miracles are proofs and evidences of revelation is now abandoned with practical unanimity, though here and there we may discern partial and faint-hearted attempts to revive it. The late Dr. Figgis, for example, in his Hulsean lectures, *The Gospel and Human Needs*,¹ expressed the opinion that miracles, so far from being a stumbling-block to faith "were becoming once more a help, were indeed of the essence of revelation"; and even made the surely desperate assertion that if the Virgin Birth of Christ were abandoned, it was all up with

¹ See preface, p. vii.

Christianity. His interest of course, was to uphold genuine Christian theism as against naturalism, pantheism, and deism. But even so, it is hazardous to call upon definite specific miracles, such as the Virgin Birth, to come to the aid of faith, and still more so to make them in any sense the foundation of faith. Even Bishop Gore who expended a considerable amount of controversial energy in insisting upon the miracles of the Virgin Birth and the Bodily Resurrection of Christ in their literal and physical sense, conceded that the Christianity of the future, while accepting these miracles, would think very little about them. It is very generally recognised that Christianity must carry miracles, rather than miracles carrying Christianity. It is then, all the more remarkable that miracle is treated so much as a theme in itself, that the terms in which it is defined are drawn not from the nature of revelation but from that of ordinary reason. In other words miracle is generally defined in relation to the idea of law, as that law is formulated by science, but little attempt is made to bring the idea of law itself into vital relationship with the Christian conception of revelation. Miracle is placed in the position of a defendant before the bar of scientific law. The attempt is sometimes made to discover a loophole in the network of law through which miracle may creep. Or the idea of law is scrutinised and criticised with reference to its philosophical presuppositions, as is done in a masterly manner by Dr. Tennant, and it is shown that law in its legitimate signification does not preclude miracle.”¹

But here law, however cleared of illegitimate philosophical presupposition, is still left standing as the main standard of reference. This is brought out in two points which Dr. Tennant makes in the course of his

¹ See *Miracle, Its Philosophical Presuppositions*.

discussion. First, in his assertion, that though miracle cannot be dismissed as an impossibility, no specific miracle can be asserted as having happened; for the alleged miracle may always be explicable in terms of some law which we do not know as yet, but which we may in the future discover. And second, and more important still perhaps, in his insistence that what is called natural theology must remain as the indispensable foundation on which everything that claims to be revelation must be built. That is to say, revelation must dovetail into a rational induction from the world of experience. The understanding of the world, as it now is, the world left standing, as it were, in its own right, must be the prime object of religious and theological thought. It follows therefore, that it is the law-controlled world which constitutes the main term of reference to which miracle is made. Belief in miracle is indeed justified as probably, though not certainly, demanded by theism, but the theism which legitimates this belief is that which is established by reason apart from revelation, a theism which is therefore an induction from the world of empiric actuality as investigated and known by science. Miracle remains, if at all, as an occasional interference with and interpolation into a scheme of things which is in the main law-ruled. And thus it is that the conclusion is reached that though miracle is not impossible, it is never clearly and decisively encountered. We can never say that a specific event is a miracle, because what constitutes an event as miraculous, as a direct act of God which can never be referred to natural law, cannot in the nature of things be shown to have taken place. All that could possibly be said of an event, however wonderful, is that it is not now referable to what we know of natural law. No delimitation of the sphere of natural law can be made

a priori, so that we have no standard by which we could decide whether a particular event was miraculous or not. We shall attempt presently to do justice to the element of truth that is contained in this conclusion. Meanwhile we may note that there is nothing that demands miracle in this view, save perhaps the general theistic idea. And even this idea scarcely demands its actuality, it only leaves the door open for its possibility. In fact the possibility of miracle is defended, not on the grounds that religion has any vital interest in miracle as such, but only because to use Dr. Tennant's words,¹ "it raises ulterior questions such as the meaning of the phrase 'reign of law,' the nature of inductive science and its relation to religious belief, the compatibility of providential guidance of the physical world with a relatively settled order, the identity and difference between theism and deism, and indeed a number of closely connected issues comprised in the many-sided problem of the relation of God to the world and man." Miracle is therefore a side-issue. The fact of it can neither be affirmed nor denied; and even could it be affirmed, it would add nothing particularly vital to religion. The controversy on miracle has therefore landed itself into a kind of impasse, and this condition cannot be regarded as satisfactory; for if miracle be a fact, it can scarcely be otiose. It is difficult to escape the dilemma: if a fact therefore not otiose, if otiose therefore not a fact.

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An attempt to get the discussion out of the impasse thus reached is made by Dr. Cairns in his book, *The Faith that Rebels*. Dr. Cairns makes a hopeful start when he

¹ *Miracle, Its Philosophical Presuppositions*, p. 1.

lays the foundation for a discussion of miracle broad and deep on the nature of revelation itself. But in his treatment of the relation between revelation and the world, he scarcely leaves the world standing in an independent or autonomous way at all. He begins with the conception of the Kingdom of God as the fundamental reality of the world, and asserts that within that kingdom there are powers and potencies to which no limits can theoretically be ascribed. He scarcely concedes in principle any independence of the world as over against God; his thesis is hardly reconcilable with the idea of a settled order, an order ruled by law, however relative, though he admits such an order. He finds revelation to consist for the most part in the thought of Jesus as expressed in his teaching—the human, historical personality, Jesus of Nazareth. He does not seem to recognise the relative nature of the thought of Jesus as man, or to consider that the true inwardness of that thought can only be understood when we reach a standpoint above and beyond the historical Jesus as such. Like so many modern theologians he begins with the *story* of Jesus as historical man, instead of the New Testament *witness* to Jesus as the revelation of God. The kingdom of God, he argues, came with Jesus and set itself against the evils and limitations of life. Jesus regarded suffering and calamity together with sin, as forming a kingdom of evil against which he opposed himself. His miracles, including the nature-miracles, were of the nature of conquest over this kingdom of evil. Since the kingdom of God is the final reality of the world, it is but want of faith to assume that evil and suffering belong to the nature of things. They have no standing in reality, they are to be overcome. He avails himself of Dr. Tennant's conclusion that there

is nothing in the idea of scientific law, when cleared of its illegitimate philosophical presuppositions, to render miracle impossible, *a priori*; and advances to the conclusion that given revelation, given the kingdom of God, miracle is a power which can be drawn upon, theoretically at any rate, almost without limits. But he goes too fast, and he goes too far. With a certain *naïveté* he protests against the idea that deliverance from evil is only to be looked for on the other side of death, regardless of the fact that death *is itself* the great basic evil, and its existence and inevitability necessarily involve the presence and persistence of evil to some extent, and even to a great extent in the world as it now stands. The weakness of Dr. Cairns' presentation is that it fails to define the Kingdom of God as having come in Jesus, in such a way as to leave the world in its empirical actuality still standing, and standing with a very real if relative independence of its own. While death remains as the law of life, while man is not yet delivered from the dominion of death, the kingdom of God cannot be said to have *come* in the sense which Dr. Cairns attributes to that word. It has indeed come as word of God to man, as divine revelation and promise. It has made a beginning in revelation and in the faith which responds thereto. It has come nigh. The first act of the great drama, so to speak, has been played. But the kingdom of God as present actuality has not yet come. In its essential meaning and character it lies over the other side of the great dividing-line of death. It is therefore futile to assert that there are no essential limits to the power of miracle. There are such limits. The independent autonomous world, however relative be its independence, presents very definite limits to the power and range of miracle. Dr. Cairns indeed argues that the dominion

of death has been broken by the resurrection of Christ, that in the resurrection his faith in the kingdom of God as the last reality and the all-pervading power of the world was vindicated ; but he fails to perceive the significance of the fact that Christ overcame death only by accepting it and submitting to it. Christ did not ¹“ break through the world-reality limited through death, by miracle ” in his resurrection. He accepted this limitation, he bore the evil of the world, he took it away *in the bearing of it*. And it is to the cross that he calls his followers, if they would attain unto the resurrection. The dominion of death has indeed been broken, but not so that it is now in present actuality taken away.

One is tempted to ask Dr. Cairns if he believes that faith here and now could raise the dead, whether he thinks that it is necessary for men still to bow before the dominion of death. If death remains still standing, as it clearly does, then deliverance from evil in the full sense of the word, in the sense that corresponds with the kingdom of God, must take place not on this side of death, but on the other ; and miracle is definitely limited in the range of its activity and power in the world ; and limited, be it noted, not simply through any spiritual deficiency on the part of men, such as lack or feebleness of faith, but limited by the world itself, its very real, even if relative, self-standingness, independence and autonomy. Some miracles are impossible, *rebus sic stantibus*.

Dr. Cairns is right in his method of handling the miracle problem, but he is wrong in his presuppositions. He is right in starting from revelation and in interpreting revelation as in its nature miracle, but his conception of revelation needs revising. Revelation does not consist in the thought and teaching of the historical Jesus in

¹ Barth, *Das Wort Gottes*, p. 89.

themselves. Nor does it consist in the death and resurrection of Jesus as mere historic facts. It consists, as we have seen, in a certain interpretation of Jesus, an interpretation which mere historical enquiry cannot reach. It is the New Testament witness of Jesus as revelation, the apostolic word of gospel, the Christ not after the flesh but after the Spirit, the Christ who is word of God to man. To isolate Jesus from the relations in which he stands in the witness of revelation, is to make a false abstraction and get all one's perspectives wrong. It is not what Jesus said, not even what he did as historic man, but in the divine significance of what he said and did, what all that means in relation to the transcendent God and His coming to the world, it is this which is matter of revelation.

It is only when we have reached the 'secret' of Jesus, when we have reached that in him which is hidden from all mere historical enquiry, that which appeared and was made manifest to faith through the Holy Spirit in his risen and exalted life, that we get the Christ of revelation ; and it is only then that we are in a position to estimate the real and abiding significance of his thought and teaching as historical man.

The kingdom of God came in Jesus as word and promise of God, it did not come "in power" that is, as present actuality which could be possessed and drawn upon by men without limit. It was, even in his own thought, present indeed, but present only in its beginning, in its promise ; present as the first approaches of an event which was in its true nature still in the future, beyond that supreme limitation of the world called death, towards which therefore the urge of the kingdom impelled him. Certainly the power of the kingdom was with him, but not if we may make a subtle but absolutely

essential distinction, the kingdom itself "in power." To regard the kingdom of God as part of our human property, so that we can draw upon it almost at will, is not in accord with the fundamental nature of the New Testament witness about Christ. Dr. Cairns in his eagerness to demonstrate that Jesus overcame the world does not let his thought rest sufficiently on the fact that he was at last led to the point where his overcoming could only take place by *bearing* the world, standing under its limitations and making them his own, becoming obedient even unto death, yea the death of the Cross. In the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ we see indeed that the present order is to pass away: the end of the old world and the beginning of the new take place in advance. But, it is to be noted, they take place—*in advance*. The old world with its autonomy, however relative that autonomy may be, is still, for the present, left standing. The taking away is a revelation, a promise, a word of God to man, rather than an actual empirical fact. Miracle does indeed appear in the world, but it appears under the conditions of a world, which in its present actuality still remains. To deny that is "to bite on granite."

Our conclusion on Dr. Cairns' book is that in its extravagance and lack of realism, it presents an impressive warning against placing revelation in the historical personality of Jesus as such. How misleading for example in its implications, however true in itself, is the following: ¹"the difference between His (Jesus') achievements and the greatest of other men's achievements is a measure of the spiritual difference between Him and them. It is like the difference between Shakespeare and some modern playwright." But the

¹ *The Faith that Rebels*, p. 154.

difference between Shakespeare and a modern playwright is quantitative only, and quantitative differences between men have nothing to do with revelation as the New Testament understands it. To seek for revelation in the quantitative differences between men, to see it in "an extraordinary spiritual personality," who yet remains of essentially the same order as ourselves is to abjure the specific New Testament witness. Revelation arises not in the quantitative differences between men, and not in "an extraordinary spiritual personality" as such, but in the crucial qualitative difference between God and man, a difference which is expressed in the witness to divine revelation in Jesus Christ.

Dr. Cairns' treatment of the miracle-problem therefore, can scarcely be called successful. It is too much in the nature of a cutting of the Gordian knot, which can only slowly and painfully be untied. Nevertheless, as a reviewer of his book observed, he has done something to lift the question out of the stale-mate in which it had become set. By beginning with revelation, by taking the idea of revelation in earnest, and setting the world as a whole in its light, he had prepared the way for advance.

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At the beginning of this chapter we indicated our conviction that the clue to the miracle problem lies in the New Testament idea of the Holy Spirit. It is in and through the Holy Spirit that revelation becomes truly revelation. What takes place without, takes place in its meaning, its nature, its significance, within, in the Holy Spirit, in the miracle of faith. The nature of the miracle within is the clue to the understanding of miracle in the world. We are faced with the problem of

determining, to begin with, the nature of that new consciousness which arises in faith, in the Holy Spirit, and of fixing its relation to our empirical consciousness. And from thence we proceed to interpret the nature of miracle in the world, and the relation of miracle to the world in its autonomy, its nature as law-ruled in the scientific sense.

And yet this statement of the method of approach to the problem is liable to misconception. In commencing with the subjective side of revelation we do not propose taking Christian experience as our datum, examining it after the manner of the psychologist, and then proceeding from the results achieved to certain definite conclusions about revelation on its objective side. The category of revelation according to the New Testament witness transcends the antithesis between subjective and objective. We can never deal with the subjective and objective sides of revelation in abstraction the one from the other. The Holy Spirit means that we see each side in the light of the other. Our concern throughout is neither with inward experience nor outward fact in themselves, but with the *word*, the witness which contains certain definite implications both in regard to inward experience and outward fact. Our contention is, however, that nothing can be postulated about revelation on its outward side which is not vitally and organically connected with what may be postulated on its inward side; for revelation only becomes so, in and through the Holy Spirit. What then may we say as to the relation between that new consciousness which arises in faith to man's empirical consciousness? This is the question on which at last hinges the whole miracle problem. For the relation which exists between the Holy Spirit and man's ordinary consciousness indicates the nature of the relation

between the supernatural and the natural in general. The Holy Spirit, Who is the subjective side of revelation, or to put it otherwise, God in consciousness, is other than the human spirit, the consciousness which man actually 'has,' and which can be investigated by the psychologist. He is transcendent and supernatural. Yet He is, in revelation, related to that human spirit in such a way that man comes in some sense to possess God in his here and now consciousness. The question is, in what sense? Could we answer that question with any precision, we should be in a position to determine the general relations between the supernatural and the natural. To that very difficult question we must therefore here devote a little close attention. And we will approach our problem by way of a brief discussion and criticism of Schaefer's valuable book entitled *Das Geistproblem der Theologie* (The problem of the Spirit in Theology).

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In this book, Schaefer criticises the Dialectic Theology associated with Barth, Gogarten and others, on the ground that the New Testament affirms while this denies a direct 'having' and 'possessing' of God in consciousness even in this present life, a having and a possessing which manifests itself in characteristic expressions and manifestations of a psychological kind. According to Schaefer there is a direct union of the Spirit of God with the human spirit, so that while these two are to be distinguished from one another, they in a measure coalesce. Schaefer strongly emphasizes the distinction between the two, but he protests against what he conceives to be the dualism which would refuse to make an essential kinship between the spirit of man and the Spirit of God the point of departure in dealing

with problems of faith and the Holy Spirit. The natural and the supernatural then, are here essentially one in kind. But, he contends, though the possession of the Spirit is a psychological visibility manifesting itself in direct and characteristic psychological forms, it yet does not fall within the scope of psychology to pass any verdict one way or the other upon its reality. Will he then hand over the problem to idealistic philosophy with which he asserts divine revelation to possess a very strong congruity? He will not do this. He will take the way of philosophic idealism with regard to the theory of knowledge, but not with regard to the *content* of knowledge where the final things of life and the world are concerned. That, he says, must come from revelation. Thus he asserts that faith is in no way dependent upon psychological or philosophical attestation, but that there is given in it, as belonging to its nature, an immediate certainty that what it believes as to its divine origin expresses the truth and reality of its inner experiences. Faith is a certainty of a unique kind. The certainty does not flow from the experience as its sequel, it is the inner nature of that experience. Therefore though Christian experience is a psychological fact with characteristic psychological expressions, it is no psychological datum to be investigated impartially and as it were from the outside, and to be validated on psychological or philosophical grounds. But certain difficulties arise at this point. Can psychology and philosophy be warned off the field in this way? If in man's consciousness there may be even here and now, a direct and literal having and possessing of the Spirit of God, if this having shows itself in characteristic marks of a psychological nature, if the connecting link between the Spirit of God and the Spirit of man can be a fundamental immanence and kinship relating them with one another,

it is difficult to see how Christian experience can exempt itself from those criteria and standards whereby experience in general receives validation. If the Holy Spirit becomes definitely and directly a part of experience through the word of the gospel, how can it not be an objective datum of enquiry and investigation? The certainty which is alleged to belong to its nature, inasmuch as, though coming from God, it has its roots in the nature of the human spirit, can scarcely escape the challenge which all alleged human certainty must meet. It will be involved sooner or later in the general problem of knowledge. But, urges Schaefer, something happens to the human consciousness in faith and the Holy Spirit. It is acted upon by a power coming from outside of itself. Its certainty arises out of a new orientation and modification of consciousness itself. Through the word of the gospel, the word of the crucified and risen Christ, it finds itself bound in an absolute dependence on God and by an absolute claim to obedience to the divine will, and on that very account freed from self-will and for the love and service of man. There is much in this point of view which expresses our own position, though we have our doubts whether experience can vouch for so much about itself. The point of divergence, however, arises from the fact that Schaefer takes his stand on the side of Schleiermacher in repudiating any fundamental dualism of a human and rational kind between man and God. Thus it is difficult to see how the power that meets man from without can be at bottom anything more than the perfection of those spiritual powers and tendencies which are immanent within man's own nature. And if it is not, how can the faith experience refuse those criteria of validity which are elsewhere accepted as authoritative and determinative?

Moreover, it may be urged that it becomes increasingly difficult on Schaefer's presuppositions to claim universal validity for the Christian experience and the Christian revelation. Can these be regarded in any unique sense as supernatural? We would say that universal validity can only be predicated of that which brings all religion and all experience to a point of crisis, which rejects them in their empirical actuality and sets forward something which is radically *new*. One may indeed establish a differentia between Christianity and other religions, on the basis of which a claim to universal validity may be brought forward. But can such a claim be maintained in this way? The question arises, and it is becoming increasingly acute to-day, whether this differentia is substantially anything more than the historic individuality of a religion or a mode of religious expression. Modern historical science is bringing to light these differentia everywhere, and the perception of them is undermining confidence in absolute validity and leading to the idea of the relativity of any and every form of religion. Thus Troeltsch began with a firm conviction of the universal validity of Christianity. He thought he could establish it very much on the lines that Schaefer pursues in his book. He thought he could discern an overwhelming manifestation of God in human life, the coming into consciousness of a great power from without and above, a manifestation and a coming which correspond with a revelation in the depths of the human soul, "awakening men to a new and higher quality of life, breaking down the barriers which the sense of guilt would otherwise set up, and making a final breach with the egoism obstinately centred in the individual self."¹ But further reflection led him to serious questionings. He asserts that he was led to see

¹ *Christian Thought*, p. 20.

more clearly how thoroughly individual Christianity was, how inseparably it was bound up with a specific type and order of historical life and culture. He tells us that he was led to the conclusion that while Christianity was valid for us, it did not possess the same validity for other historical and cultural formations. He could not deny the possibility, which the deeper study of history made a possibility of a very high kind, that "other social groups may experience their contact with the Divine life in quite a different way"¹. Historical relativism seems to be the nemesis on that over-emphasis on experience which is not absent from Schaefer's treatment.

But what chiefly concerns us here is the bearing of all this on the subject of miracle. At first sight Schaefer's thought seems to give a very bold and specific content to the idea of miracle. Revelation, he insists, is a movement from God to man and not from man to God. Nevertheless the movement becomes a matter of direct inward experience so that in that experience there is a real and literal having and possessing of God. This happens through the fundamental and basic kinship between the Spirit of God and the spirit of man. Is miracle thus simply an inward thing, a profound psychic disturbance and liberation? Schaefer would repudiate this. He places the inner miracle in continuity or polarity with the death and resurrection of Christ. But in what sense is Christ in His death and resurrection shown to be miracle? In the sense apparently that in Him the Spirit of God came so mightily that He became the bearer of the life and love of God to man. Schaefer rightly repudiates too rigid a Christocentrism. He insists that what we have to do with is no mere example and illustration of human fidelity on a divine scale, but a real act and coming

¹ *Christian Thought*, p. 26.

of the transcendent God in Christ. Nevertheless the miracle remains essentially an inward and spiritual thing. It is something that happens within the inner life. No doubt in this way one may think that one has succeeded in giving a thorough-going spiritual and idealistic interpretation to the world. Idealism becomes mightily confirmed by revelation. The world in and through the miracle of Christ and the answering miracle of faith, becomes vindicated and validated as essentially spiritual. But Christianity as we have seen is not concerned with the validating of the world. Indeed its concern is of quite a contrary nature. It is concerned with overcoming it, proclaiming its end as it now is, and its new beginning. To validate it, leaves it still standing, with its laws the fundamental criteria of all that comes to it with a claim to be revelation. One asks, what is the relation of miracle to nature? ¹ Schaeder regards the fundamental character of nature in itself, as weakness. It is a condition of being just there, just set out, and therefore unfree and uncreative. In the light of faith, however, nature is seen to be the creation of God, in the sense that it becomes the material of His free creative purpose. Being in itself sheer impotence, having no creativeness of its own, it is plastic in the hands of God for His own divine ends. Inhering in its laws and compulsions is the working of the Spirit of God. They are the forms of the Spirit's working. But the Spirit is the Creator Spirit, so that nature always stands open to new creative acts, to miracles. Nature being thus absolutely amenable to the working of the Spirit, has a teleological function. It is there to serve man's moral and spiritual ends. Thus the Spirit affirms nature, draws it into faith. Schaeder will have nothing to do with the contention of

¹ *Das Geistproblem der Theologie*, pp. 177-186.

Barth that the nature which surrounds us as being part of our world, is in some definite and positive way separated from God, and declares that that statement is due to the lack of a clear doctrine of the Spirit on the part of Barth. Apparently he would also dissent from the view of Tennant that the explanation of evil must somehow be sought in the fact that the world of our experience is relatively, at any rate, set, independent, planted out. The being set out of nature, would according to this view of Tennant contain in itself a principle of evil and contradiction, and constitute an obstacle to the free working of the Spirit of God.

Schaeder's interpretation of nature seems to us very unsatisfactory. It is much too optimistic. Is there no principle of contradiction in nature? Is nature simply amenable and plastic to the working of the Divine Spirit? Can it forthwith serve the ends of man's moral and spiritual life? Has not man to wrestle with nature, to overcome nature, in the interests of the soul? One need be neither a Marcionite (and it is interesting to note that Schaeder absolves Barth from the charge of Marcionitism) nor a Manichee to see that the principle of contradiction, which is so apparent in man's will and consciousness, operates also at a lower level in the world of nature. Does not nature itself need to be recreated? Must we not have new heavens and a new earth if the Divine Righteousness is absolutely to rule? Is there no kind of contrariety between that which is born of the flesh and that which is born of the Spirit? Must we not say that nature itself is involved in man's sin and fall? And if the laws of nature are as such the workings of the creative Spirit, what need is there for new creation? Can new creation be anything more than the perfecting of what is already there? At the long last can miracle

be anything else than the revelation of the spiritual significance of the world as it now stands? Is it possible to give to the idea of the new creation a thorough-going cosmic significance, embracing the totality of things?

It seems gratuitous to criticise a point of view which is in many ways so powerfully theocentric as Schaefer's. But we are convinced that his treatment suffers from its drawing too direct a line of continuity between the working of the Spirit of God and that of the spirit of man in experience. We are convinced that the ultimate result of his insistence on a direct and literal having and possessing of God in the experience of faith will be that real miracle will lose its significance and content in an idealistic interpretation of the world. Philosophic idealism is at last fatal to miracle on which real revelation lives. And that fact alone makes the synthesis between philosophic idealism and revelation which Schaefer proposes, in the long run impossible.

We are forced then to a closer scrutiny of that having and possessing of God which Schaefer declares to be the essence of the faith experience. That there is in some real sense a having of God is of course not to be doubted, but of what nature? There is a moving confession of Dr. Forsyth which may be quoted in this connection. He said that he would consider his life well spent, if at the end he had nothing more to show than a humble grateful confidence in Jesus Christ as the Saviour of his soul and his world and the divine promise of the life everlasting. That is to say, he recognised that though in a sense he possessed this confidence, it was still to seek. It had come to him, but now he must come to it. It was his, yet not as his possession and enjoyment, but rather as the goal set before him to be attained as the

result of all his life's strivings. It was not so much his experience as the destiny, the 'telos', of all his experience. And there are those words of St. Paul in Philippians which may be laid aside this confession as expressing substantially the same thing: "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, becoming conformed unto his death; if by any means I may attain unto the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained, or am already made perfect: but I press on, if so be that I may apprehend that for which also I was apprehended by Christ Jesus" (Philippians iii, 10-12 R.V.). The essence of the faith experience is that life's end, life's telos, life's goal has broken into life. But that means that for us men the substance of faith is less a possessing than a decision. Faith is as Brunner says ¹"a having and a not having," indeed we may say, a having in a not having. Our experience ²"begins its life from moment to moment as a new thing." In other words between our actual experience and the new experience of faith or the Holy Spirit there is a discontinuity, a crisis which is continually resolved in ever new decision. This discontinuity is so radical that it can only be described by the words death and resurrection. "Ye died, and your life is hid with Christ in God" (Col. iii, 3 R.V.). "Are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death" (Romans vi, 3 R.V.). "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: the old things are passed away; behold, they are become new" (2 Corinthians v, 17 R.V.). "When Christ who is our life shall be manifested, then shall ye also with him be manifested in glory" (Colossians iii, 4 R.V.). "That which is born

¹ *Theology of Crisis*, p. 63.

² Heinrich Barth, *Die Geistfrage im deutschen Idealismus*, p. 36.

of the flesh is flesh ; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (John iii, 6).

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Faith then, is the crisis of man's consciousness. It is man's consciousness being gathered up into "a totality act," a totality decision—but gathered up by a transcendent consciousness, the Holy Spirit. It is not therefore to be sought for, in definite experiences within the consciousness, which may be psychologically examined and perhaps labelled supernatural. It is the decision which is the miracle of faith ; the consciousness not as experience in the ordinary meaning of that word, but *the consciousness as decision*. Faith is not to be interpreted as man's consciousness as it were unified, synthesized and adjusted to some spiritual environment : man's consciousness as such is not unified and synthesized, but negated, judged, brought to crisis in faith. The miracle of faith is not mere adjustment, it is death and resurrection, the "mind of the flesh" continually abjuring itself, giving itself up to the "mind of the Spirit."

Yet once more, and this is of the utmost importance, when we speak of the miracle of faith, we do not mean that our consciousness can be estimated and valued from a new point of view. Faith is not a new way of interpreting ourselves, valuing ourselves. The miracle of faith is a real miracle. Something happens to us, an aggression is made upon us, we are *made* new not simply *declared* new, we die and rise again, and this dying and rising becomes the supreme life-movement of our consciousness.

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Now this view of faith as the gathering up of con-

sciousness into a great act of life-decision has an immediate bearing upon the whole question of miracle. Considering it still from the point of view of man's inner life we may express the matter thus : this act of life-decision is on its positive side supernatural. It is not our act, but God's act in us. Faith is the gift of God. It is miracle. Our consciousness understood as decision and *as standing decision*, means that while this consciousness still remains definitely ours, our own actual human consciousness, it is constantly, as it were, passing upward into what we may call for lack of a better name, a supra-consciousness which is not ours, but which is the mind of the Spirit. Efforts have been made to locate the Holy Spirit in the regions of the sub-conscious mind. The phenomena of inspiration have been attributed to the uprising of the divine from its depths in the sub-conscious into the sphere of the conscious mind. The Holy Spirit is interpreted as that which lies deep down in the sub-liminal. But that presupposes an immanent relation between the divine and the human. And it denies the nature of faith as crisis. It is not in the sub-conscious that the Spirit dwells, but in the supra-conscious, in that element which is above consciousness as such, but into which the consciousness is continually pressing in and through decision.

If a man will reflect deeply upon the nature of decision, he will feel, though he will not be able to describe it, this element which we have called the supra-conscious. As far as we can describe it at all, we must describe it as deliverance, deliverance from that pressure of constraint which gathers round the mind and urges it towards decision ; it is even a kind of ecstasy, the sense of a standing out from one's self. Now consider man's empirical consciousness not as having decision in it, but as itself being decision. The empirical consciousness

still remains in its ordinary human actuality, but above it, ruling over it, is this supra-consciousness, this deliverance, this standing out of the self, which is the mind of the Spirit. It is this which we call the supernatural, miracle, the Holy Spirit. The supernatural therefore is above consciousness rather than within it. But just because it is above it, it is also in a real sense within it, for the very fact of a crisis of consciousness means that the nature of crisis belongs to the consciousness before the fact yet takes place. We need to remember that crisis is as definite a connection as continuity. We realise our true nature, we become ourselves only in the act, the decision, the self-surrender of faith. Ordinary human experience is there, to lead us to faith. Experience discloses its true nature in responding to the supernatural. Only thus, in this response are we truly ourselves. The Holy Spirit, the supernatural, is therefore in our consciousness, in some sense, at all times. He is never wholly absent from it. Were that not true, He could not manifest Himself there, could not come there in the crisis of faith. We conclude then, that man's life is never wholly independent, autonomous, self-determined, it is always in some way touched by the supernatural, worked upon by the Holy Spirit. There is miracle in experience and no part of experience is wholly without it. But the supremely important point to notice is, that the element of miracle within experience can never be discovered by rational or psychological investigation. It is something which remains hidden to all psychological inspection. We can never draw a line in experience between the natural and the supernatural. Always does the Holy Spirit remain transcendent; always between the new consciousness of the Holy Spirit and man's own empirical consciousness is there from the rational point of view not

continuity but discontinuity and crisis. This hiddenness of the supernatural in our experience, this inaccessibility to all inspection, this impossibility of definitely classifying experiences as natural and supernatural, becomes of the utmost importance for us to keep in mind, when we pass on to consider the nature of miracle in the world outside.

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We are now in a position to address ourselves to this larger question. Miracle within points to the nature of miracle without. Just as in the man of faith we have to do with a self which is relatively independent, self-determined, but which is gathered up in faith into supreme life-decision, into the supernatural, into the Holy Spirit ; so in the world, we have to do with an order which is relatively autonomous, "a planted-out world" to use Dr. Tennant's expression, a law-ruled world so far as scientific investigation can see it, but nevertheless an order which is to be overcome, and which in principle has been overcome in Jesus Christ. This order therefore is only relatively autonomous ; concealed within it there is the supernatural, there is miracle.

Now that which outwardly corresponds to the crisis and miracle of faith within, is the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. The resurrection is therefore as Barth has called it "the absolute miracle." It is not to be looked upon simply as an historical event lying within the sphere of historical events in general. It is the crisis of all history and all nature, the abrogation of the law-conditioned order as such. It signifies the end of the old world, and the beginning of the new. It is the undermining and subverting of the world's autonomy, just as faith, or the Holy Spirit, stands for the subverting of

man's own autonomy. It points to the end of the "reign of law" which belongs to the world's autonomy. Paul expresses it in the words, "Christ being raised from the dead, dieth no more; death no more hath dominion over him" (Romans vi, 9). It is in the words "dieth no more," and "death no more hath dominion over him" that the nature of the resurrection is expressed. The beginning of a new world-order, an order of life which is not death-ruled and therefore not "law-ruled"—for the end, the telos of law is death—law is the order of the world ruled by the destiny of death—it is this which the New Testament means by the resurrection. Clearly this is not historical event simply as such, nor is it physical miracle as such. What historical event, what physical miracle could reveal that "Christ dieth no more," that "death hath no dominion over him"? Of course the resurrection of Christ is historical, in the sense that it takes place in history. But the historical facts, be they what they may, the resurrection appearances for example, all that emerges into historical visibility and becomes object of historical enquiry—all this is but accompaniment of the resurrection, not the resurrection itself. It matters little how these 'appearances' be interpreted, whether objectively or subjectively, whether realistically or psychologically, whether physically or spiritually—these are curious questions which have only an indirect bearing on faith. These signs, these appearances were but temporally bound up with the resurrection, they are not the resurrection itself. Attempts are sometimes made to insist on the physical and as we might call it, realistic character of the resurrection on the grounds that had the first witnesses been confronted with the dead body of Jesus, faith in the resurrection would have collapsed. But who has the right to say that? If revelation be a reality, if there was a

real approach of God to the world in Jesus Christ, if in him the divine life laid hold of our human death, in some way or other faith in the resurrection would have been created and maintained. Those who are disposed to entertain the idea of a subjective and psychological interpretation of the resurrection appearances, may perhaps find their justification in the reflection that such a great divine event as is postulated in revelation, was bound to produce striking psychological phenomena; and that these would have proved in the long run too striking and too powerful to be overborne by any confusion which perplexing circumstances might have temporarily created in men's minds. All that would have happened, had such a contingency as the 'realists' suggest, taken place, would have been that the tradition might have taken a somewhat different form. But these considerations, interesting and intriguing as they are in themselves, do not really touch the heart of the matter. What corresponds to faith, is not a crude realistic event, but the resurrection as the critical event, the subversion and overcoming of the actual, empirical world and the beginning of the new order; the end of the old order in death (which perhaps precludes the 'physical' idea of the resurrection) but the swallowing up of death in risen, divine life. It is all this, not in its historical, factual aspect but in its aspect of revelation, of divine word to man, which constitutes the faith of the resurrection. The resurrection transcends all our rational categories. It is the absolutely new, once-for-all event, to which our categories, subjective and objective, psychological and realistic, spiritual and physical do not apply.¹ It is the "absolute miracle" of the world. But as such, as the supreme crisis of the world, it reveals the fact that the

¹ See Barth, *Die Auferstehung der Toten* (second part *passim*).

nature of crisis belongs to the world. For this "absolute miracle" does the world exist. That is its meaning, its destiny. The resurrection was, as it were, the gathering up of all the transcendence in the world into supreme event and manifestation. But in being this, it reveals that there is transcendence in the world (incidentally it is this that we mean, or should mean by immanence); it is the demonstration of the fact that the world is only relatively and not absolutely autonomous, independent, "planted-out," law-ruled.

Now the resurrection is the one miracle in the world which we can definitely and explicitly assert. In the light of it we can assert that there are others, but we cannot with certainty isolate them and declare them. The resurrection assures us that the independent autonomous law-ruled world has been laid hold of by a power that subverts it as such, and overcomes it. This miracle has not to be referred to law; law must be referred to it. Law is seen to be a relative, provisional, and contingent ordering of the world, corresponding to the condition of the world as fallen, as in discontinuity with God, as a world which is to pass away. Its purpose in the natural sphere is according to its own order, what its purpose is in the moral sphere. The real world of God is not "law-ruled" but personally ordered by God Himself. Even in the natural sphere, as in the moral, law is there as a kind of "schoolmaster to bring us to Christ," to miracle, to grace, to the resurrection. The world now standing, law still abides but with its rule in principle undermined. We live in a world ruled fundamentally not by law but by miracle. But just as in the case of the consciousness which has seen itself in the light of the crisis of faith, we are not in the position to select any body of events within our world and definitely label them miracle. Miracle in

the world is something which is hidden from sight, hidden from rational enquiry. Its existence can be believed, but it cannot be proved. The scientist or historian cannot as such come up against miracle. That is true, even as regards the miracles of Jesus. We can firmly assert in the light of the resurrection a miraculous element in the works of Jesus, but we cannot say that this event or that is definitely miracle. Paul found the Jews still seeking for signs in spite of the miracles of Jesus, and in spite of the fact that at the time when he wrote, miracles were believed to be of frequent occurrence. And similarly to-day. Miracle is in our world, but we cannot isolate it in definite events which the outsider must recognise to be such. It abides as a ground for belief in providence and for the practice of prayer. The believer may trust in the divine providence, and he may pray, and pray in the sense of making definite petitions; and he may do all this on the ground that real transcendence, real miracle is at work in the world. He will find that such faith is justified in experience. He will doubtless often come up against events in his experience, of the miraculous character of which he will himself be convinced. But even so, he may not acclaim these before the world as miracles which the world must recognise as such. The element of miracle in the world though real, is not rationally discoverable, is not capable of being isolated and manifested, and certainly not capable of objective proof and demonstration.

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We may now briefly gather up the conclusions which we have reached. Miracle is not historical event as such; that is to say, it is not something that lies sheer and clear upon the plain of historical life, so that it can be seen by

the mere spectator. It is rather something which lies hidden within historical event, and which is apprehended by faith, the new consciousness of the Holy Spirit. The onlooker may sometimes encounter strange events, but he is in no position to call them miracles. He may also explain these strange events rationally and scientifically and yet all the time he may be missing a real element of miracle in them. For example, he may refer the stories of healings in the gospels to well-known laws of the relation between mind and body, but it does not follow that there was in those healings no more than can be explained that way. Indeed the Christian is committed by his faith to, at least, the probability that there was more. Standing as he does on the faith of the resurrection he cannot isolate this "absolute miracle" from the whole context of the activity of Jesus in the world. It was the Christ of the resurrection, the Christ in whom during the days of his flesh the resurrection secret lay hidden, who lived and wrought. And inasmuch as Christ stands in the context and texture of the world's life, miracle cannot be excluded from life in general. Apart from the reality of the miraculous in the world, there is no place for providence and no place for prayer. Prayer and providence imply miracle. Apart from miracle, prayer is merely monologue. There is no response. There is no divine transcendent activity to correspond with our human activity in prayer. But prayer in the New Testament is through and through petition. It is a calling upon divine, transcendent activity. Of prayer that is not definitely petition the New Testament knows little or nothing. The very prayer of communion is communion with one who has overcome the world, and even here petition is never absent. And this conclusion may not be got round, by alleging that spiritual boons are granted

in prayer, but that no deviations or interferences with the causal law-ruled order may be asked or expected. For the world is set forth in Christ in the light of its overcoming, and the whole world is set forth in that light. We may not indeed bring forth single isolated events in our experience as objective proofs of faith, but we may make our faith, which by its very nature is a supernatural, transcendent thing, the ground for prayer, and prayer definitely as petition. At the same time we shall recognise that the world is not yet literally and actually overcome. That is to say, it still retains a relative independence as over against God. Therefore we shall not be dismayed if our petitions are not directly answered. We shall be willing to wait, for indeed the whole of our life is a waiting—a waiting for that redemption which is assured to us in our faith. In our life and in our world wonder is hidden, though we cannot trace it out after a rational manner. We shall on the ground of miracle continue to pray and indeed to make our whole inner life a life of prayer. Were miracle not hidden, were it capable of being isolated, and definitely delimited, we might pray only in times of special urgency and distress, and our prayer would be a sort of magic. We should have two spheres clearly marked out before our mind's eye, the sphere of the world's autonomy which could not be influenced by prayer, and the sphere of transcendence and miracle which could. Our prayer might easily become not a call upon God in His personal love and freedom, but a call upon mere power. It could become less than personal relation and personal communion.

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There is a further misapprehension of the idea of miracle, which calls for a brief comment in this connec-

tion. It is sometimes said that miracle is simply a new interpretation and valuation of the world or ordinary experience. The believer, it is alleged, is able to regard the world with its laws and events, together with the experiences of his own life, in a new light. He can interpret them teleologically. That is to say, he can see that the laws of nature, for example, are the necessary background for the emergence of moral and spiritual personality. He can perceive also, that apart from the trials and vicissitudes of life the higher spiritual values, such as love, sympathy, and sacrifice would never appear. Therefore he can call all life and experience miracle. He can see that something is really happening by means of all this apparently fortuitous concourse of events and experiences, some end is being reached and realised, divine transcendent purpose is being fulfilled. Miracle is therefore ordinary experience viewed from a particular point of view. Miracle is a new subjective reading of the world, a new valuation of the world. But this idea overlooks the fact that the world is to be overcome, not seen from a different angle. The world according to this idea, is simply accepted and allowed to stand. The divine act of redemption and revelation is simply identified with the evolution of the world order. There is no rational contradiction between the world and God. Prayer in its petitionary sense, which is the fundamental sense it possesses in the New Testament, becomes an impossibility. All that man can do is to perfect his adjustment to the evolving course of things. He can make his correspondence more complete, but he cannot expect any real answers to his prayers. Religion becomes essentially impersonal. An evolving process takes the place of a personal God.

A somewhat similar criticism must be made against a

conception of miracle which is sometimes brought forward with the object of easing the strain between religion and science. According to this conception, miracle is not the breach, not the abrogation, of natural law, but the suspension of a lower law through the operation of a higher. Alleged miracles may be divided into those *contra naturam* (against nature) and those *supra naturam* (above nature).¹ This distinction was made by the late Dr. Sanday in a controversy with Rev. N. P. Williams on the subject of the miraculous, with special reference to the Virgin Birth of Jesus. There were, said Dr. Sanday, alleged miracles which were *contra naturam* of which the Virgin Birth seemed to be an example, and others which were *supra naturam* such as the healings of disease recorded in the gospels. Miracle of the former character could not be accepted, while miracle of the latter was perfectly credible. To quote an illustration, used by both parties to the discussion, the man who catches a cricket-ball, suspends the law of gravity, but he does so, not in the sense that he breaks that law, but in the sense that he brings into operation another and a higher law which counteracts its working. Miracle, therefore, in the sense of the suspension of a lower law by a higher, may freely be granted, but not where a real breach is made in a scientifically attested law of nature. But as Dr. Sanday's disputant was not slow to point out, the most fantastic miracles could be defended in this way. Who will maintain that we are acquainted with the whole range of law as it operates in our world? But the criticism of Dr. Sanday's argument goes deeper still. As Dr. Tennant has observed in the book from which we have already quoted: ²"In order that a miracle may have any

¹ See *Form and Content in the Christian Tradition*, by Sanday and Williams.

² See *Miracle, its Philosophical Presuppositions*, p. 29.

significance for dogmatic theology, it must have that incompatibility with natural law which in the dogmatic interest has been asserted and in the pseudo-scientific interest (that is, in the distinction between *contra naturam* and *supra naturam*) has been denied." Miracle is essentially *contra naturam*, that is to say, it negates nature as such, subverts its autonomy, overcomes it. No relief is obtained by accepting nature as such and adjusting miracle to it. It is of the very essence of miracle that it should disqualify the empirical world in its own independent, self-standing, autonomous character. Unless we keep in the forefront of our minds the idea of a world in principle overcome, we can make nothing of miracle. Truly for purposes of scientific investigation, the world has to be accepted in its own right, but the autonomy of science in the full and absolute sense, like that autonomy of reason in general, cannot be accepted without renouncing revelation. That the world is a passing world, that in Christ's Cross and Resurrection, it has in principle been judged, negated, redeemed and newly created—this is the declaration of revelation. Such a declaration in no way denies a relative independence to the world now standing. Inasmuch as the world is not empirically and actually overcome, scientific law has its place, and in that place it is supreme. But a transcendent element and power lies hidden within the very autonomy of the world, though its presence is discoverable by faith alone. Our conclusion can scarcely be summed up better than in the words of Cowper's well-known hymn :

God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform ;
He plants His footsteps in the sea,
And rides upon the storm.

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER IV

With regard to the remarks on Schaefer given in this chapter, the following may be added from the standpoint of historical criticism. In Schweitzer's *Paul and His Interpreters*, and more fully in *The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle*, Schweitzer brings out the point that Paul's faith was that of a Christ mysticism but not of a God mysticism. The God mysticism he says was "not yet." Here and now the believer possessed the experience that Christ lived in him, but not in strict meaning that God lived in him. That further stage belonged to the future, the other side of temporal existence when the Son should have delivered up the kingdom to the Father and God have become "all in all." In contrasting Paul's conception of the world and its relation to God with Stoicism, Schweitzer says: "In the Stoic view the world is thought of as static and unaltering. The world is Nature, which remains constantly in the same relationship to the world-spirit pervading it and pervaded by it. For Paul, however, the world is not Nature but a supernatural historical process which has for its stages the forthgoing of the world from God, its alienation from Him, and its return to Him. This dramatic view of world history is also in its own way a kind of mysticism, a mysticism which can assert that all things are *from* God and *through* God and *unto* God. But what it never can assert is that all things are *in* God. This is for it simply not the case so long as there is a sensible material world, and a sensible world history. It is only when the End comes, when time gives place to eternity, and all things return to God,

¹ *The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle*, p. 11. Schweitzer declares the Areopagus speech of Acts xvii to be unhistorical and un-Pauline.

that they can be said to be in God." We need not discuss here the precise theological nature of this distinction between Christ mysticism and God mysticism, but it does suggest that modification and closer precision are needed in Schaefer's declaration: "Paul and the whole Christianity orientated towards him have never known otherwise than that faith is a having, or better, that in this present time-world a positive having of God is possible for man." The 'having' must be interpreted as a goal and destiny involving at all times crisis and decision rather than as a possession which involves simply expression. Never can a sheer equation be made between the movements of God's Spirit and the human spirit, and never a direct continuity.

Schweitzer further says²: "According to the Eschatological view the elect man shares the fate of the world. Therefore so long as the world has not returned to God, he also cannot be in God. That Paul does not think of Sonship to God as a being-in-God depends ultimately on the fact that this sonship is for him, as it also was for Jesus, a thing of the future. Not until the coming of the Messianic kingdom will men be children of God. Before that, they are those who have the assurance of having been called to this sonship, and are therefore, by anticipation denominated Children of God." And he adds: "The being in Christ is not conceived as a static partaking in the spiritual being of Christ but as a real experiencing of His dying and rising again." It is necessary, however, to emphasize the fact which of course Schweitzer fully recognises, that Paul does not yet conceive himself as literally sharing the resurrection of Christ. His aim is that he may "attain unto the resurrection of the dead,"

¹ *Das Geistproblem der Theologie*, p. 36.

² *Mysticism of Paul*, p. 12.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

and he explicitly declares, "not that I have already obtained." The goal is a "high calling." He will know the "power" of Christ's resurrection by sharing "the fellowship of his sufferings being conformed unto his death." The resurrection is his by faith, but not by possession, and faith draws its character from its object. It is not literally a possession, it is a crisis, a decision, even a death.

The making of faith into a having of God is in essence Catholic, not Protestant. It is the Catholic idea, carried into the Reformation content of revelation and translated from the outward world of visible fact and institution into the inward world of conscious experience. In the ecclesiastical and sacramental system of Catholicism we possess an object with which revelation is made identical. The revelation becomes an historic visibility belonging to this here and now world. It is a datum, a possession, on this side of the line which divides the present from the future. Revelation receives a concretion in time and history. It belongs to the world's life and history. It is very definitely a possession of our here and now humanity. Protestantism, of course, cannot accept the 'givenness' in that form, but its tendency is often to transplant that givenness into the world of inner experience. Not as an historical visibility but as an inner possession of the soul, is revelation brought definitely and positively within the sphere of human "having." Our position, which we believe to be that of the New Testament witness, is that revelation, the Word of God, cannot be equated with or made directly continuous with anything here. It stands over the whole sphere of man's existence both outward and inward. It implies ever a call to man and a judgment upon man, and at no point do these cease to be the nature of the connection of the God given in revelation with the

life of man. Man possesses God truly but only in constantly renewed decision. It is ever a case of "forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before."

CHAPTER V

THE SPIRIT AND REASON

FAITH, we have said, is a totality act. But in saying this, we do not mean that faith is, as is so often stated, an act of the single undivided personality. This way of putting the matter cannot be allowed to stand, for the reason that the single undivided personality is a figment. Personality, as we know it, is in contradiction, and the more it becomes truly personality, the more, that is, it becomes a moral entity, something that is expressed in action and not in mere being, the more does its nature as contradiction reveal itself. ¹“It is distinctive of the moral consciousness that it is not, like the philosophical, single, simple, and harmonious, but double, divided and even rent. It is not monistic but dualistic. A solution of the world which is determined to be theoretic above all, must end in Monism, which is the death of religion; but if it be moral, if it be religious, it must begin with the experienced and certain fact of the divided conscience, a standing state of collision, war and sin. It begins with a state of the consciousness anterior to its branches as theoretic, æsthetic, or ethical, a state underlying all these.” In faith we are made to stand above that contradiction in which our personality is involved, above that state which underlies our consciousness whether as theoretic, æsthetic or ethical. ²“Outside of it, (faith) *i.e.*, in sin, man is no more a unity; the inward unity or harmony of his existence is disintegrated into a diversity of autonomous functions. No totality-act is possible. The will is separated from knowledge, the feeling from the intellect;

¹ Forsyth, *The Principle of Authority*, pp. 5-6.

² Brunner, *The Word and the World*, pp. 73-74.

there emerge the well-known distinct psychological functions which the psychologist studies. Empirical psychology has always to do with this disintegrated man, never with the integral. For that central act which re-integrates personality in its unity, namely faith, lies above the categories with which psychology apprehends its objects." When therefore we say that faith is a totality act we are thereby confessing that it is not, in strict meaning, an act of ours. It is an act of God on us and in us. It is God in action upon our consciousness. It is the Holy Spirit. But though the act is not strictly ours, it is an act in which our whole consciousness is involved. That state of the consciousness "anterior to its branches as theoretic, æsthetic and ethical, a state underlying these," is made the subject of divine action in faith. No part of our being remains unaffected. The reason, as well as the feelings and the will, is brought under judgment, is brought to a point of crisis in faith, because underlying reason, feeling and will alike is this state of consciousness which is rent, divided, in contradiction. Reason is brought to a point where it recognises not a mere truth, but a Lord, a point where it renounces its autonomy.

The kind of truth which reason encounters in revelation is not an extension of rational knowledge as such. The divine knowledge given in faith is not, as it were, super-added to our ordinary human knowledge. It is not as if our knowledge carried us part of the way, and then came in a new divine knowledge of a parallel kind which led us straight to the goal. We do not proceed by analysis of the material presented to us in consciousness and by critical evaluation of our human faculties, and then discover that in addition to all we learn, something is presented to us to make up for its defects. The Roman

Catholic view that reason can establish the being and attributes of God and the fact of human immortality, while revelation must come in to supplement these with the knowledge of salvation, the view, that is, that revelation is built upon a foundation of rationally ascertainable truth, that it completes the building which reason leaves unfinished, is inconsistent with our pre-suppositions. What the reason discovers is not God, though it may establish a first cause and a world ground; not immortality, though it may discover reasons for believing in the survival of physical death. The relation of revelation to reason is not that of a mere extension, nor is it that of a limit or a law; it is that of an entirely new and thorough-going criticism, which at one and the same time calls the deliverances of reason in question and establishes them in relative right and validity. Revelation involves a new epistemology, that of the Holy Spirit. Certainly reason has a function to perform even within the sphere of revelation itself. It may and it must criticise the declarations of faith in so far as these declarations are necessarily expressed in the forms of rational thought and doctrine. But the inner meaning and content of faith, as distinct from its intellectual forms of expression is not subject to rational criticism. Rather must we say, it is there to criticise the deliverances of reason.

Reason is, of course, autonomous within its own sphere. But that sphere is the world of our common experience, and that world is, as we have said, a world in fall and in contradiction, a world not to be just accepted but to be overcome. The sphere of reason is prescribed by the object of reason, and that object is the world of our actual empirical life and consciousness. Knowledge of the world will then be true knowledge, but it will not

be in the strict sense knowledge of the truth. The world as such is not truth ; only the world in crisis is truth, the world redeemed, the world overcome, the world restored to its original meaning. But inasmuch as the world in truth is the world of our common experience restored to its original meaning, the knowledge which reason gains is not to be set aside and not to be simply extended, but to be set out in new terms and relationships. The interconnections between phenomena which reason discovers and sets out, will not be denied in faith, will indeed be reaffirmed, but will be placed in a light which radically changes their significance. For example, the interconnections which modern science has established in its theory of evolution are matter of genuine knowledge. In other words, what is expressed by the term evolution does not take place. Higher forms, that is to say, more highly differentiated forms do stand in a definite connection with lower forms, and so far as we can see, this connection is essentially the same throughout the whole field of physical and biological existence. We may say that higher forms evolve from lower, or emerge from lower in the time series. And yet what takes place is not really evolution or emergence. Life, for example, does not evolve or emerge from matter. There are no doubt definite interconnections between life and matter, definite material conditions which are necessary to the appearance of life. The theory of evolution is valuable in establishing the facts of these interconnections and conditions. But when it proceeds to an interpretation of their essential nature and sets forth this interpretation as final truth, it lands itself in ambiguity and indeed in error. The term evolution, for example, in its strict sense means a mere unfolding of what is already present. As applied to the relationship between life and matter, it would imply that

the former is simply a more highly differentiated form of the latter, that it is but the expression of what is latent in the latter. Life, however, presents features which are quite other than those of matter, and evolution in its strict sense is unable to account for the appearance of the new. Accordingly we have theories of 'emergent' or 'creative' evolution which seek to account for the arising of the new from the old. These terms are, however, highly ambiguous. Things do not emerge; nor have we any real right to equate the terms creation and evolution and speak of a creative evolution, for in so doing we are confounding ideas whose connotations are essentially different. Nevertheless the point of view which speaks of evolution with perhaps the qualifying adjective 'emergent' or 'creative,' is, as seen from our side, the human rational side, a true point of view. In some such way must we describe those conditions and interconnections which exist between the higher and the lower. But our side is not the finally true and right side. The interconnections on which we base our interpretations are really there, but these interpretations have only a relative validity. And to extend them in such a way as to cover the whole field of fact, however critically we may perform this task, brings us not nearer to the final truth of things, but in the end leads us further away. We arrive in a sense at truth, but we never arrive at *the truth*. *The truth* is the crisis, even the reversal (not the destruction, but the turning-round) of what we mean by truth. It is our truth set out in a new light which radically changes its significance. There can be no thought therefore of dispensing with reason or of taking a flying leap into anything in the nature of obscurantism. The work of the scientist and the philosopher must be hedged about with no restrictions. It must proceed, for the very

reason that its conclusions may be set out in a new light, a light which finally reverses their significance, and in the reversal of which *the truth* is apprehended.

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We shall endeavour to justify this apparently paradoxical position, by a brief examination of the main position outlined in Professor Alexander's great work *Space, Time and Deity*, so far as that position bears on the subject of our presentation. This work is particularly interesting from our point of view for several reasons. It is an attempt by means of careful and painstaking analysis of the material presented to reason in consciousness, to construct a ladder whereby the mind may rise from the most elementary data of experience to the idea of God; a metaphysical essay constructed rigidly on scientific foundations. Alexander will not have it that there is a conflict between religion and science. He repudiates any attempts to reconcile religion with science. He will not admit that the spheres of science and religion are different, nor will he allow that these two activities of man's consciousness are parallel modes of approach to reality. The idea of the autonomy of religion as distinct from the autonomy of science receives no support from him. Science he insists, is, and must be, religious. Purely in virtue of being scientific does science lead to religion; for the material with which science deals is no mere datum but a real becoming. To put it otherwise, science has to deal with an object, which in being what it is, points beyond itself. The more adequately it examines and analyses its material, the more it is led beyond the material presented to it as mere datum. Though Alexander does not mention Otto's conception

of the 'Numinous' in his book, he has since declared it to be a valid one, and in harmony with the direction of his own thought. Only, he cannot agree that the 'Numinous' stands for any objective existence; rather does it stand for the next step onward from objective existence, the adumbration, the shadow, as it were, thrown forward by existence, of existence which is to come. Science is always thrown forward by the very data with which it has to deal. It must, as it were, step in advance of actual, given existence; it must by virtue of being science, become religious. In this philosophy, the autonomy of science is taken as presupposition, and taken in such a way, that no room is left for any other autonomy. Thus the discussion of the relation⁷ of religion to other aspects and activities of man's consciousness is greatly simplified. There is no tension between the various autonomies of religions, science, art, etc., no adjustments calling to be made between the various approaches of man's mind and spirit to reality. There remains at the last but one approach, the scientific, and that approach can be trusted to do justice to all the demands of the situation.

Alexander will not concern himself much with the question of epistemology or the problem of knowledge. Epistemology he declares to be not the foundation of philosophy, but one of its chapters. The question of how we know, he thinks must be solved 'ambulando'; it is solved in the analysis of *what* we know. In this way reason can go forward without any disturbing and paralysing self-questionings. It can go forward, without fear or hesitation, in a straight line. A philosophy based on this presupposition, a philosophy in which the autonomy of reason proceeds in this sovereign and all-dominating way is clearly of the utmost interest in

connection with the theme of this chapter. We shall expect to find that the conclusions reached are specially relevant to our discussion, and as a matter of fact they are relevant to a degree which leaves nothing to be desired.

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The position elaborated in the book may be briefly summarised as follows. Reality is a process of emergent evolution of which the first term is space-time and the last term God. Space-time is the original primordial matrix from which all actuality arises and ascends. Space involves time, and time involves space. A careful analysis of space and time reveals the fact that each needs the other in order to become actual. They are not two but one. This space-time is the fundamental creative principle of all existence physical and mental. The universe is, as it were, a great 'urge' upwards from space-time to God. There is a 'nisus,' a drift, an evolving and ascending series issuing forth from space-time. Given space-time and you get eventually the whole universe of experience which is never a static thing, a thing complete, a mere datum, but a perpetual becoming. Now the highest term in that 'urge,' the highest stage which space-time has as yet thrown out of itself, so to speak, is man as mind and spirit. But mind and spirit are not final. They await the appearing of God. Man as mind and spirit is, as it were, the highest spot at which this upward 'urge' is at present actualised. It is to be noted that man is in no sense a fall from God downwards, but a rise from space-time upwards in the direction of God. His life-urge is the urge towards the true, the absolute, the final life. It is in process of creating God, of reaching Him as it were, as it waxes and ascends.

But in this system God is only an idea. He never becomes actual. He is always the next term on, the next reality to appear. He is a 'myth' of the great urge of the universe, the 'Numinous' which lies as a shadow on the sum-total of the phenomena, with which science has to do. Science involves Him and can never become truly scientific if it dispenses with Him. But myth though God is, He is not thereby unreal. The myth is an idea of the real, and an idea produced by the real. Indeed the God-idea is the most real idea there is. We may, in fact, say that God is the *nisus* of the universe towards divinity. As '*nisus*,' as '*drift*,' He is real existence. But as really God, as divinity in its actual being, God is only an idea. And here a most important and vital point is to be noted. Were God in the absolute sense, the sense demanded by Christianity as by all theistic religion, to become actual existence, the whole space-time world would be swallowed up, and abolished as such. The '*nisus*' would come to an end, and the universe as we know it would disappear. God's existence would be veritable sentence of death on all existing actuality. It would mean, to put it in religious language, that the whole empirical scheme of things would be brought under judgment, and under absolute judgment. The existence of God would mean supreme and all-embracing '*crisis*,' such as from our side could only be described as death. And yet again, were God to become a real existence, all existence would be gathered up, subsumed in Him. The universe would die only to be raised up into a new mode of being. There is in Alexander's philosophy no continuity from our side, to God as an existence, only crisis of a complete and absolute kind. But just because the space-time order is fundamental and cannot be abolished, just because God

rationally conceived is involved in it and rises from it, God can never become actual. The universe both postulates God and proclaims His impossibility. Its life is a continual effort to bring Him to the birth, but His existence would mean its death. The infinite and absolute remains the supreme idea, the goal of the whole universal process, but as actuality it must always break up into a number of finites and relatives. We may gather up Alexander's conception of God and His relation to the world under the following points :

(a) God, as the goal of the urge of the universe, the consummation of the 'nisus' which springs out of space-time and makes the world a process of emergent evolution, God as the reality of the universe Who nevertheless can never become actuality, is *other* than man, other than mind and spirit as we know them. He is inconceivable, and unreachable by us, the completely other who yet subsumes in Himself all that we are. There is a qualitative difference between Him and the whole of existence including ourselves. ¹As Barth, in approaching the idea of God from an entirely different and opposite side, says, "God stands over against man, as the impossible to the possible, as death to life, as eternity to time."

(b) Man is the point where God becomes real in the sense of becoming an element of consciousness. He is real (without becoming actual) nowhere save in man's mind. The 'urge' of the universe which is towards His appearing, becomes definite experience in man's mind and spirit. This is interesting as removing the reproach of anthropomorphism which is often levelled against theistic belief, as also that of anthropocentrism where man is

¹ *Das Wort Gottes*, p. 165.

frequently accused of an overweening conceit of himself in attributing to himself a special and unique place in the scheme of things. It is also valuable in rebutting the suggestion of the New Psychology that the idea of God arises from a 'libido' or desire which craves fulfilment. Clearly if God's existence were a rational possibility, man would stand in personal and conscious relation to Him, for only in man does experience of Him arise.

(c) God is bodily, in the sense that all corporeality is subsumed in Him. That is important as making God's actuality, were it a possibility, the redemption of all existence. Could Divine redemption become a reality, it would cover the whole range of nature as well as that of mind and spirit. It may be objected that Alexander's view does not as a matter of fact permit of such ideas as redemption and transformation; that he asserts on the contrary that not only good but evil exists in God, because God is the whole of existence in its 'nisus' or drift. Evil accordingly exists in God, but not in His Godhead, His Divinity. But the universe as 'nisus' or drift definitely precludes the possibility of God's actuality. Were that actuality a fact, the whole system of the universe would disappear in its present form, but it would disappear not in the sense of being blotted out, but as being subsumed in God. The idea is difficult to grasp, because in this philosophy the very conditions which postulate God, declare His impossibility as actual being. God while being in the most vital and organic connection with the universe yet stands in supreme and absolute contradiction to the universe. The very 'nisus' which moves towards the Infinite and the Absolute can only create the actuality of the finite and the relative. There is surely a contradiction involved in this philosophy, not perhaps a logical or rational contradiction, but rather a contradiction in

essential being, in the universe itself of which this philosophy treats.

(d) God's actuality means the absolute crisis, the taking-away of all known and experienced reality as such. He is to the sum-total of things (including mind and spirit as we know them) as death is to life. And yet He is the consummation of reality, its complete gathering-up and subsuming. Were God actual, space-time would be gathered up into infinity and eternity. As space-time it would be no more. As infinity and eternity it would be something other than what it is. Between the life of God as actual existence and reality as we know and experience it, there is discontinuity, contradiction, crisis. Were God actual, man as we know Him would be a fall from him and through man all existence would be a fall. The life-urge in man is precisely what postulates God and denies His actuality. It is therefore, in relation to God's actuality, a fall and a contradiction. It is probable that Alexander would dislike this language intensely. He might prefer to say that were God in His pure and absolute divinity a possibility, by that very fact this whole philosophy would be disproved. But what we are concerned to show is that the very 'nisus' or movement which connects the world with God for ever separates God from the world. It falls back continually upon itself. Though straining forward to infinity it continually breaks up into a multiplicity of finite existences.

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Now it is not our purpose to criticise Alexander's method or conclusions from the philosophical point of view. The present writer can claim no competence for this task, but he has a kind of intuitive conviction, that

granted the autonomy of the reason and the self-standingness of the world of which reason treats, some such conclusions are likely to be reached. Indeed this philosophy is specially interesting from our point of view for the very reason that the autonomy of reason is, as it were, a specialised function of the autonomy of the world itself. It involves the position that the world of experience must stand, as it were, inviolable. It cannot be done away, it is itself in its evolution and drift the only reality. It cannot be conceived of as a world to be overcome. Precisely in the impossibility of its overcoming lies the sanction and charter of reason. Space-time is the unalterable and creative element from which the world arises and from which the mind of man in its efforts to understand the world arises. Abolish space-time and reason itself collapses. The very categories of reason are differentiations of space-time. Alexander is therefore able to relegate epistemology to a very secondary place in philosophy. The relation between subject and object in perception and cognition is not a unique one, it is simply a specialised form of the general relations which exist between phenomena. This seems to the present writer a very sound conclusion ; and it involves the position that granted the actuality of God, reason itself is brought into that same crisis in which all existence is involved. Certainly Alexander does not demand the autonomy of reason in the sense that the determinations of reason in themselves are constitutive of reality ; on the contrary the determinations of reality are constitutive of the functions of reason. Reason is not permitted to evolve according to the logic of the pure idea. It remains throughout as

¹Dr. Tennant would say 'alogical' and alogical in a very

¹ See brief but illuminating discussion of "Reason" in Tennant's book *Miracle*, pp. 70-73.

thorough-going sense, because it is a determination of space-time, and a mere function although the chief function, of the universe in its 'nisus.' It can never proceed as if it had, so to speak, life in itself. Its life is but an expression of the life of the universe. Not the least merit of this philosophy is that it avoids abstraction like the plague. It may be that this is why it is so severely criticised by the mathematical philosophers. Reason is never permitted to abstract from reality, and then deal with such abstraction in an independent way. It is kept in the closest connection with experience throughout. In that sense reason is not autonomous in this philosophy. But inasmuch as the world of experience is left, as it were, inviolable, inasmuch as its negating and overcoming are regarded as inconceivable, the fundamental autonomy of reason is placed in a greatly strengthened position. It can collapse only with the collapse of the autonomy of the universe itself.

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Now the chief interest of the philosophy from our point of view is that, in the very contrast which it presents to Christianity, it comes paradoxically very close to it. In making reason autonomous in a sovereign way, through the grounding of it in the autonomy of the world of experience, and in finding the meaning of the universe in God Who is yet made an impossibility through that very autonomy, it cannot but call up by way of contrast the very conception of revelation which has been the subject of our discussion. One might almost say that it is this conception in reversed position. The interconnections which it notes as it proceeds upwards from space-time to God may still remain in this reversed position, but the whole schematism will stand out in new meaning and

new significance. Instead of beginning with space time and mounting upwards to God, we begin with God and note that He stands to the world not in a relation of rational continuity but in that rational discontinuity which we term crisis. The world of empirical experience on account of the very independence and autonomy which makes God a rational impossibility, is qualified as a world in contradiction, a fallen world, a world to be overcome. The 'urge,' the 'nisus' of the universe which becomes willed and directed in man, since it leads to the negation of God, since even on the highest plain of its activity it brings God down into finitude and relativity, since it will not let Him be, and be the Lord, indicates a radical contradiction between man and God, a contradiction in which the creation itself is involved. This life urge leading to finitude leads to death. God stands over man and creation "as the impossible to the possible, as death to life, as eternity to time." The solution can only come by way of revelation and miracle, that miracle which is expressed by the terms death and resurrection. But granted this miracle, the schematism of Alexander's philosophy may remain for the most part unchanged, and it becomes highly significant. There remains between revelation, thus understood, and this philosophy a curious affinity. It is established in relative right because it is brought under a fundamental criticism and judgment.

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What brings it under this criticism and judgment is the fact that in revelation we have not simply a movement *from* the universe, but a movement *to* the universe which meets that former movement and disqualifies it as such. Alexander maintains that the various religions of the

world are, as it were, mythological expressions and representations of the 'nisus' of the universe outward and upward. They are the forms in which man seeks consciously to relate himself to this 'nisus,' and in which his mind lays hold of it in a practical and symbolic fashion. Our contention would be, that however true that might be of religion in general, it is not true of that movement of revelation which we call Christianity. For Christianity is consistently and coherently, in all the range of its theology and in all the significance of its cultus of worship, an expression of another movement, namely a movement *to* the universe. It exists, ultimately, for no other reason than to proclaim that this movement has taken place, and to bring home to men the consciousness of its reality and power. That is the supreme motive which determines the whole effort of its thought in the building up of its theology, and the whole significance of its worship. Its consciousness of a universal mission and a universal validity, does not arise from a sense of mere superiority to other religions, but of a fundamental and decisive otherness in relation to them. It arises from the sense that God has come, that something final and all-decisive has happened, that "the grace of God hath appeared bringing salvation to all men" (Titus ii, 11, R.V.). Its Universalism, its Catholicism rests not on a conviction of the superiority of its thought-content to anything which can be discovered elsewhere, but purely on the nature of the divine event to which it witnesses. It comes not with "excellency of speech or of wisdom:" rather "I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified" (1 Cor. ii, 2). It all gathers round the ideas of judgment and grace. It expresses, that is, not a movement *of* the world, but a movement *to* the world. Everywhere is the Christian

experience, that of being confronted by a reality which comes to man and brings his whole being and his whole world under judgment and therefore under grace. Everywhere does it witness to a great divine event which in its nature is all-determining and all-decisive, which is essentially "once for all" and non-repeatable. Its essence lies in its being word *to* man, and not word *of* man. No other religion has a theology in the sense that Christianity has, for no other religion is word of an event on which the salvation of the world depends. Its symbolism whether of rite or creed is that of a movement from God downwards and not that of a movement from man upwards. Its nature as eschatological that is, as proclaiming the end of man, time and things, its thoroughgoing transcendence, while at the same time it remains historical, its reconciliation of rational opposites—death and life, sin and righteousness, chance and election—stamp it as something unique and *sui genesis* in the history of religion. In the long run it has to be accepted as a whole or rejected as a whole. It cannot be gathered up into the general religious consciousness of mankind, or expressed in terms drawn from a general philosophy of religion. It is through and through, in thought, in the cultus of worship, in practical piety, a religion of *grace*. It ultimately has no meaning, apart from its fundamental presupposition, namely, that there has been an all-decisive approach of reality to man, a movement not from the universe but *to* the universe.

It is necessary to pursue this thought a little further. If one were asked what was the distinguishing feature of Christianity in its claim to be divine revelation, one would answer in a bold word, that it is its definite, positive breach with all religious *a priori*ism. It does not indeed deny a religious *a priori*, but it denies that this has anything

to do with revelation proper. A philosophy of religion must concern itself with the nature of the religious *a priori* in the soul of man, and the pursuit of such philosophy is a perfectly legitimate and indeed necessary activity of the human mind. But what results therefrom is not divine revelation ; it is an aspect of human thought and knowledge which, like all other aspects, has to be brought under the criticism of, and set out in its true relations by, divine revelation. It belongs to the region of science and philosophy in general. Christianity is at bottom something entirely different, and Christian theology works with data and presuppositions which are different from those of the Philosophy of Religion. Indeed we may say that the very heart and centre of the Holy Spirit idea for thought is—no religious *a priorism* where revelation is concerned. The Holy Spirit is *God*, and being God is transcendent to man. Neither in the Old Testament nor in the New is the Spirit in any sense a constituent or property of man's nature. His contact with the human soul is ever definitely miracle. We may repeat and emphasize here Dr. Wheeler Robinson's dictum quoted in a previous chapter : " This is the true Hebrew dualism—not the contrast between the human body and soul (or spirit) but that between terrestrial nature as being of one order and celestial as being of another." And this ' dualism ' is even more definitely brought out in the New Testament than in the Old. The Holy Spirit then spells the end of religious *a priorism* for the purposes of revelation. A transcendent reality, something which belongs to God alone, becomes the true *a priori*. The only human *a priori* in the light of revelation is—sin, weakness, need, negativity. " While we were yet weak, in due season Christ died for the ungodly " (Romans v, 6 R.V.). " While we were yet sinners,

Christ died for us" (Romans v, 8); "God being rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead through our trespasses, quickened us together with Christ" (Ephesians ii, 4-5 R.V.). In the long run nothing can be made of the distinctive outlooks of the Bible if one regards them from the standpoint of religious *a priorism*. What can be made from that standpoint of such ideas as the sovereignty of God, election, grace, justification by faith, eschatology and the like, which pervade the whole witness to revelation? Does not the 'scandal,' the 'offence,' the 'foolishness' of Christianity arise in part, at least, from its repudiation of religious *a priorism*? How can a religion which gathers entirely round the ideas of death and resurrection be fitted into a philosophy of religion which works with the *a priori* idea? And whenever Christianity renews itself at its source, does it not in some form or other mean a breach with all religious *a priorism*? Was that not pre-eminently the case with the Reformation with its insistence on justification by faith alone? Even our modern adventist sects which Spengler thinks are likely to form the seed-plots of that "new religiousness" which he asserts will appear before the complete extinction of this our Western Culture, proclaim their Christian lineage in this regard at least, that they represent an absolute (and in their case irrational and arbitrary) farewell to all religious *a priorism*. Christianity resolutely refuses to make anything in man the organ of revelation. What in man connects him with revelation is need, sin, death. ¹"No religion ever had the courage thus to go to the bitter end in giving man up, as the Christian faith does. All religions make an attempt at the self-justification of man—at least of man as a religious subject. It is exclusively the faith in justification by grace

¹ Brunner, *The Word and the World*, pp. 80-81.

alone which sacrifices not only the rational man, or the moral man, but the religious man as well." The Holy Spirit means that sight is given to the *blind*, the *lame* walk, the *dead* are raised up, the *poor* have the gospel preached to them. Nothing is so little tractable to religious *a priorism* as the distinctive outlooks and ideas of Christianity. If we press this even to the point of over-emphasis, it is because we feel that its significance is strangely overlooked. The very fact that a breach with religious *a priorism* is visible in the whole witness to revelation, shows how impossible it is to interpret Christianity as a mythological expression of the 'nisus' of the universe outwards and onwards towards deity. We ask, how comes it to pass that we are presented with a witness which cannot be dovetailed into any philosophy of religion working with the idea of a religious *a priori*? And we suggest that the only satisfactory answer to this question is that Christianity in its true meaning has nothing to do with that 'nisus' of which Alexander speaks, but that it is a movement *to* and not *of* the universe and the mind of man. The differentia of Christianity from everything else is more than a mere differentia. What we have is a newness, an otherness, a difference in kind and not merely in degree.

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It is paradoxically the case that both the strong point and the weak point of the philosophy we have been considering is its epistemology. The strong point, because in it the act of knowing is in no way isolated from the general relations in which things stand to one another in concrete experience. Knowing is but a special function of the general determinations of the world in the

actual course of its evolution. This seems to us, as we have already said, a fundamentally sound conclusion. The mind is given no specially favoured place in the scheme of things. But the epistemology presupposes the inviolability, the self-standingness, the independence and the exclusive reality of the world of empirical experience. It cannot permit anything other than the world of experience to be real. What this world postulates and permits, that and that only can come into the field of consideration. If the world of empirical experiences is disqualified in its independence and autonomy, if it is a world which is to be overcome, then the autonomy of reason itself collapses. If there be not only a movement from the universe, but a movement to the universe, then the whole question of epistemology is thrust into the foreground and made the all-determining one. Reason itself is involved in the crisis to which our being is brought. It is compelled together with all being to recognise a Lord. It has to recognise its own relativity. And precisely this is the contention of the witness to revelation given in the New Testament. It is the Holy Spirit, the new transcendent and supernatural consciousness which appears in the crisis of the old—it is that which becomes the category for the apprehension of the final and fundamental significance of the world-progress. The interconnections which the scientist or the philosopher discovers in the world, these indeed may remain, but their ultimate and final significance is apprehended by faith alone. It is only thus that the tension between science and religion, or to speak more precisely, between science and revelation is removed. Alexander is probably right in considering metaphysics as an essentially scientific activity. Genuine metaphysical knowledge is but a deepening and extension of scientific knowledge. But

as such it shares in the relativity of science. It can never reach to ultimates. Always must it stand under the fundamental criticism which revelation brings. Always must reason be brought to that crisis which the new epistemology, that of Holy Spirit, makes clear.

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But now it will perhaps be contended that the autonomy of reason can maintain itself in that it is possible to discern in reason itself a transcendent element. Troeltsch, for example, following Kant maintained such a transcendent element in man's mind which is therefore able to perceive the presence of transcendence in the world. He was therefore able to interpret faith as rationalisation. His thought has certain affinities with the rationalistic orthodoxy which finds its supreme expression in Catholic theology, in spite of its wide divergences from this orthodoxy. Both really hark back to the old 'logos' idea of Platonism and Stoicism. An immanent reason in the world, the logos, which is yet transcendent, inasmuch as it is the creative principle of the world, is recognised by man, because in man it becomes conscious activity. In this recognition man is referred to God as the transcendent ground of his life and his world. But in Catholicism this transcendent world-ground comes to reveal itself in a way that corresponds with its essentially transcendental nature. It reveals itself in miracle, the miracle of the Incarnation. Troeltsch broke with orthodoxy, because though he was willing to see in Jesus a unique expression of the logos, he could not admit an absolute one. He could not exempt even Jesus from the relativity of history. He could recognise no Incarnation *ex abrupto*, no breach between the logos as immanent, and

the logos as transcendent. A transcendent element in reason, he contended, finds transcendence everywhere in the world, and not merely in some spot circled round, as it were, and isolated from universal history. But the more he attempted to carry out his principle into history, the more did he encounter in history that which was individual and 'alogical,' that which was not capable of rationalisation in the strict sense. That is to say, he came to see that truth is nowhere separable from those distinct and individual forms in which it has appeared in history and in which it constitutes and creates history. The idea of truth which should be universally valid, which should not be thoroughly impregnated with historical relativity and contingency, became more and more elusive. Truth was never pure truth, it was always historically conditioned, and apart from its historic conditioning, it had neither meaning nor power. The mind rarely encounters truth which is universally valid. What it encounters are rather individualised expressions of truth which have authority and power only within the concrete and historic conditions under which they arise. And this is pre-eminently the case in the region of religion. No religion is universally valid. Each religion is individual and it is in its individuality that its strength and even its trueness lies. That the various religions are pressing towards some common goal, that their true end is an escape from the individual forms in which they have expressed themselves in history into the pure spirit of religion, Troeltsch is ready to concede. ¹ But that goal is "in the Unknown, the Future, perchance in the Beyond." The words "perchance in the Beyond" are significant; must we not say rather from Troeltsch's premises "only in the Beyond, if at all"? For is not

¹ Troeltsch, *Christian Thought*, p. 32.

empirical history by its very nature individual and alogical? Is it capable of yielding true universals? Is not historical truth always relative and must it not be always so?

What has happened then is that Troeltsch starting out from the authority of reason because of its supposed transcendental nature and ground, has ended in sheer relativity. There is no absolute truth possible to man, only relative truth—that is his final conclusion. Reason after all, has missed real transcendence. And the descent from this relativism into sheer scepticism is an easy one, and we may add, ultimately an inevitable one. Modern thought is well on the way in this descent from relativism into scepticism. Spengler's great work *The Decline of the West* is, in this respect, a straw which indicates the direction in which the current is moving. ¹As Brunner says, "the modern man no longer believes in an absolute in whatever form it may be offered, whether of Christian faith, of idealism or of mysticism. If he believes in anything it is in absolute uncertainty." And he adds, "an age which has lost its faith in an absolute, has lost everything. It must perish; its end can only be—the end."

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The only way of escape from relativism and from the scepticism in which relativism ends, is for the reason to renounce its autonomy. Reason ultimately has no life in itself. It must at the long last surrender either to scepticism or to what the New Testament calls the Holy Spirit. It must find its life in a real transcendence, not a compromised one as in Troeltsch, nor in a forced one, as in rationalistic orthodoxy, but in a real one, in the Holy

¹ *The Theology of Crisis*, p. 8.

Spirit. It must come under that crisis in which all being stands in revelation. It must consent at the last to die that it may be reborn. Among the greatest words ever written in this connection are the words of Paul : " Seeing that in the wisdom of God, the world through its wisdom knew not God, it was God's good pleasure through the foolishness of the preaching to save them that believe " (1 Cor. i, 21, R.V.). And these words again : " But we speak God's wisdom in a mystery (that is, a revelation) even the wisdom that hath been hidden, which God fore-ordained before the worlds unto our glory : which none of the princes of this world knoweth : for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory : but as it is written, Things which eye saw not, and ear heard not, and which entered not into the heart of man, whatsoever things God prepared for them that love him. But unto us God revealed them through the Spirit ; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For who among men knoweth the things of a man save the spirit of the man, which is in him ? Even so the things of God none knoweth save the Spirit of God. But we received not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God ; that we might know the things that are freely given us by God " (1 Cor. ii, 7-12, R.V.). Too long have these and similar words been given a merely pious significance, a significance for edification. Too long has their realistic and ' truth ' character been ignored. Too long have they, even when their specific declarations have been brought under consideration, been regarded as mere Paulinism. These declarations, on the contrary, belong to the very substance of revelation, they are expressions of the mind of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the spirit of truth : we must not weaken this declara-

tion by turning it round and saying, the spirit of truth is the Holy Spirit, as if our reason as such could discover the truth, as if the truth were but a mere extension and amplification of the rational truth which belongs to the passing world. There is much talk of bringing all the treasures of wisdom, science, philosophy and culture to the feet of Christ, as if we had something extraordinarily valuable to give, instead of at the long last everything to receive.

CHAPTER VI

THE SPIRIT AND HISTORY

IN saying that faith is a totality act, we are saying that it is the act in which man arises as truly *man*. The real man appears, man as he is in his true nature and meaning. Apart from faith, man is not yet truly reached ; only man as fallen, with his personality divided and in contradiction, man not at one with himself, man whose actual life is not grounded in true humanness. Now history is concerned with man, and man's life. Its interest and its value arise from a belief in man. That is to say, we believe that in history we are confronted not simply with an object to be investigated and evaluated but with an active subject to be addressed, interrogated and judged, a subject moreover by whom we are ourselves addressed, interrogated and judged. We are confronted with man and man's life. ¹Bultmann has observed that if a man will grasp the essence of history " he cannot contemplate it, as he contemplates his surrounding world of nature, and by contemplating it, orientate himself to it. The relation of man to history is different from his relation to nature. If he directs his attention to nature, he substantiates there only an existence which is not himself. If on the other hand he turns to history, he must tell himself that he is himself a piece of history, and thus he directs himself to a context (an active context) in which he is himself involved with his own existence. Therefore he cannot simply contemplate this context as an object, like nature, but with every word he utters about history, he says at the same time in a definite way something about himself. Thus there cannot be actual, objective contemplation of history

¹ Bultmann, *Jesus*, pp. 7-8.

as there is of nature.” Bultmann goes on to say that the essence of history is dialogue. That is to say, what we encounter in history is not an object but a subject whom we address and by whom we are addressed. History has no meaning unless we really come up against *man* in it. ¹And Bultmann adds, “the dialogue does not arise as a ‘valuation’ after one has first recognised history in its objective state. Much more does the actual encountering of history accomplish itself fundamentally only in dialogue.”

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There are, of course, many who dissent from this point of view. There are those to whom history is simply a science with laws as purely objective as are the laws of physics and chemistry. To them, man does not really appear in history, they are not concerned with him, indeed they deny him. He is but the product of forces which can be arranged and classified under strictly scientific laws. The late Professor Bury insisted that “history is a science, no less, no more.” But if history is a science, it clearly claims no special attention from the philosopher, and scarcely even from the man of science himself. Indeed it is hardly a distinct branch of science, for all that is really relevant in it, is contained in the physical and mental sciences. And it is interesting to note how meagre a place history occupies in the constructions of philosophy. In most philosophic systems, history can scarcely be said to have a place of its own at all. They are metaphysics of nature or of mind, and they would be just as valid, if the whole of humanity were contracted to one single individual with no human life behind, around or before him. ²Says Troeltsch: “Down to the time of

¹ Bultmann. *Jesus*, p. 8.

² Article on Historiography in *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*.

Herder and Hegel modern philosophy either took no account of history at all, and abandoned it to historians *littérateurs* or theologians; or else brought historical occurrences under a causal conception which was simply that of natural science philosophically generalized." It is true that a change has set in to some extent in this respect of late, a change to which Troeltsch's own work has contributed in no small degree. Nevertheless it still remains true that history as such occupies but a meagre place in philosophical thought. And to the ordinary scientist, it would appear as if the behaviour of atoms and electrons had a definite and positive significance for the interpretation of reality, while the behaviour of men in society and in history had none at all.

Now this is very singular. And even more singular than the fact itself, is it that the singularity of this fact is so rarely remarked on. The humanism of our time, as in Bertrand Russell for example, naïvely abstracts history as such from the material of philosophy and treats it as if it were of little or no account. The study of history comes to have little more than a pragmatic value. It is useful as suggesting human values; but these are regarded from the philosophical and metaphysical point of view scarcely as phenomena, but rather as *epi-phenomena*, things that have no vital and essential place in any scheme of interpretation of the world. That an act is as meaningful as a fact whether of physics or psychology, is, in not a few quarters, regarded as scarcely worthy of discussion. If action be taken into account at all, it is regarded as a datum to be subjected to psychological analysis, a mere thing, an object merely to be inspected; and the fact is lost sight of that to treat it in this fashion, is to misconceive its peculiar and unique nature and quality. The philosopher when he deals with

history too often loses sight of the truth, which elsewhere is regarded as a first principle in science, that his methods must be determined by the material with which he is dealing. To treat the correlation of acts within society as one would treat the behaviour of electrons within an atom, or even the relations of states of consciousness within a subject, is a deed of sheer violence. Action implies as its correlative, not merely detached, impartial and objective investigation, but something in the nature of personal response and personal decision. The investigator is himself involved in the study of action, as he is not in that of physics or even of psychology. His response to what confronts him is of a different nature. He is, as Bultmann says, "addressed."

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Now it is against the banishment of history from the material of scientific and philosophical construction, that the much discussed book of Spengler, *The Decline of the West*, is a weighty protest. Truly the question arises even here, whether history is truly reached, and indeed the main interest of the book from our point of view gathers round that question. But it would be scarcely an exaggeration to say that this book is the first thorough-going attempt to construct a philosophy which is based on history itself, and not a mere philosophy of history drawn from science or metaphysics. Hegel's philosophy of history in reality abolishes history. History disappears in the dialectic of the idea. History is treated as a vast rational process in which man as such disappears. The idea abstracted from all action, from all real event, deploys itself in such a way that its logic gathers all history into itself. The time-process is a mere index of the logical

idea of becoming. The idea abstracted from all event and from every real subject is everything. Man as such never appears upon the field. Real history does not come into view. Spengler, however, attempts to take history in real earnest, indeed in such earnest that everything else disappears. His book marks a reaction, probably a one-sided reaction, but a very necessary one against all philosophy of mere being, every attempt to interpret reality which would lose sight of real becoming in the sense of real action. He is very contemptuous of our modern psychology which leaves the psychologist as a mere spectator, a mere analyser of states of consciousness. History is for him the one real subject of philosophy. Every branch of science and philosophy is for him both included and concluded in the philosophy of history. He will not allow any independent value to physical science or metaphysical system as such. They belong to the morphology of history. They are historical existences, historical products, and can only be truly understood and appraised in that light. Their validity is relative to the stage of historical becoming to which they belong and in which they appear. Very noteworthy, in this connection, is his criticism of modern nature science. He asserts that it is subjective through and through. And the subject who reads himself and his own nature into the material with which he is dealing, is no pure subject who can be isolated from his place in history. The subject is himself an historical product. He is, as Bultmann says, though in a sense very different from that of Spengler, "a piece of history." He is the subject standing at a certain point in history, so that he cannot himself function save in the historical position in which he stands. Such scientific theories, for example, as evolution in the Darwinian sense, or relativity, or the quantum theory

could only have appeared when they did. They belong to the special historical formation of a special historical stage. The subject cannot be considered in himself; there is no "in himself." Removed from his historical context, he has no meaning and no real existence. And what is said of nature-philosophy is applicable to every aspect of life and thought. Art, poetry, music, sculpture, architecture, law, political and social theory, religion, all receive their nature, character, colour, from the complex of historical forces which determine the stage of any particular culture. No science, philosophy, social theory or religion, no school of art, poetry, music, sculpture, can be judged by the canons of pure objectivity. It cannot be isolated from its place in history, and treated, as it were, on its merits. There is no objective standard, standing above the flow and flux of historical becoming and change, to which it can be referred. It arises as a specialised expression of the culture to which it belongs, and has meaning and worth only in the context of that culture. History here thrusts itself forward in an all-commanding fashion. It asserts itself in a completely sovereign way. It would seem as if it were striving to avenge itself of its long neglect as material for philosophy, by claiming that it alone was worthy of the attention of the serious thinker.

Spengler's book has scarcely been seen in its true significance, at any rate in this country. Indeed it has been rather patronisingly dismissed, in spite of the tributes that have been paid to the immense range of learning and the sweeping power of generalisation which it reveals. There are, of course, many reasons for this. Idealists and social reformers were repelled by its dark pessimism. Workers in special departments of history found themselves put off from a calm consideration of its

main thesis by numerous inaccuracies of fact in the book. Scientists could scarcely be expected to welcome a philosophy which so fundamentally undermined confidence in their methods and results. And philosophers could hardly tolerate a theory of knowledge which called all knowledge in question, and made the problem of epistemology so unpleasantly acute. In Spengler, 'knowing' itself is an historical product, an aspect, a side, of historical becoming, historical action. The paradox of the situation is that Spengler himself recognises that his own philosophy could only have arisen just how and when it did. It is possible to-day, at this stage of the particular culture in which we stand. It would not have been possible yesterday, and it will not be possible to-morrow. It partakes of that relativism in which every philosophy and science stands. How can we be expected to bow down before such an apotheosis of scepticism?

Spengler's book is none the less significant. It is even a portent, and a portent which thinkers will not do well to ignore. It is a portent because it thrusts history right into the forefront and makes it call all our so-called objective knowledge in question. That history thereby finds itself called in question, is a suggestion which Spengler scarcely seems to have considered. Had he done so in any thorough-going way, he might have been disposed to bestow some attention upon the idea of revelation in its eschatological sense. He might, that is, have asked himself whether this field of historical becoming and historical action, might not itself be subject to a transcendent activity which abrogates history as such, just as history, in this philosophy, abrogates science as such. But inasmuch as his theory does take history in earnest, does thrust it into the foreground, does make it

the material of all true scientific and philosophical thought, inasmuch also as it raises questions which make the idea of revelation, as we have been considering it, specially relevant, it will be necessary to subject it to a little further examination. We have to ask ourselves does history after all really appear in this scheme? Everything is done to make it appear, but do we really get to history? Do we reach man? Spengler will not let us rest in mere things, mere objects, not even in the objects with which psychology deals. He will have us reach beyond these to man and action. But does he get to man after all? Does man emerge as man?

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The main thesis of Spengler's book is well-known. According to it, the subject-matter of history consists of a number of independent, autonomous cultures, each of which has its own appointed term of growth, maturity and decay. Each of these cultures has its own peculiar physiognomy, its soul-shape as it were, and the soul-shape manifests itself in every department of its life. Thus the religion, science, art and philosophy of any culture are but special manifestations of its particular soul, and cannot be understood excepting in relation to the culture as a whole. Accordingly, a particular stage in the culture can be paralleled with the corresponding stage of another and previous culture, and even an outstanding personality in one culture may find its parallel with that in another. Cromwell, for example was but the soul of old Pythagoras and old Mahomet taking shape under the conditions prescribed by the period of Western culture under which he lived, and under the peculiar physiognomy of that culture. There are indeed cross-sections between the cultures, pseudo-morphoses

Spengler calls them, which compel a young and nascent culture to flow into the mould left behind by a dead or decaying one. But these pseudo-morphoses, though they may affect the external direction in which the culture flows, do not really determine its nature. They introduce a certain amount of contingency into the schematism of history, but they do not fundamentally change its character. Pseudo-morphoses are accidental, contingent phenomena which need to be noted, but not to be taken into serious account so far as the general philosophy of history is concerned. One culture may affect another, but only as to its outward form, not as to its inward and essential content. Now the concluding stage of each culture is what Spengler calls a civilisation. Each culture after a flowering period in which types of religion, art, science, law, philosophy, political and social theory and so on, are manifested, each and all exhibiting in their different ways the same fundamental characteristics which belong to the specific nature of the culture itself and make it different from any other, begins to lose its vitality, its creativeness, and to harden and petrify in a civilisation. And the distinctive character of the civilisation, as over against the culture proper, is abstraction and intellectualism, theory and the mechanisation of life. The intellect becomes detached, as it were, from the soul and becomes a mere tool. Creativeness gives place to analysis, criticism, organisation. Men cease to live, to feel, to act in a free spontaneous fashion and set to work to organise, to criticise, to classify and arrange. Thought becomes more and more abstract. It becomes not the expression of life but a mere diagram of life. Man loses character, creativeness, real humanness. He groups himself in great cities in which he becomes lost, a mere cog in a great machine. His poetry and art lose their

inspiration. His religion turns to criticism and mere ethical theory. His science becomes a thing of abstractions and formulæ which are manipulated with an ever increasing degree of complexity and abstract ingenuity until they lose all real contact with experience. They become signs and symbols, whereby indeed man finds himself able to work with the universe as with a machine and so to achieve great practical results ; but for presenting anything in the nature of a *picture* of reality, they are useless. Great systems of religion and philosophy dissolve under the acid of this imperious intellectualism. In their construction they represented what Eucken has described as great life-energies, life-movements, powerful spiritual concentrations, but these being absent, philosophy loses its creativeness and declines to criticism and abstraction. Of course the particular form and direction which this process takes, will be determined by the particular type of culture. But always life and thought lose their spontaneity and power in a bloodless and devitalised intellectualism. Before, however, the civilisation ends in complete petrification, the soul of the culture asserts itself once more, though feebly in comparison with the period of its growth and maturity. There is a kind of Indian summer, or to vary the figure, the dying candle spurts up again before going out. This shows itself in a phenomenon which Spengler calls "the second religiousness." In this, men cease to think and criticise and simply abandon themselves to the desire to believe. Religion arises again, not indeed in its ancient power, but in something comparable thereto. It is interesting to note that Spengler regards religion as of the very centre of every culture. The soul of a culture shows itself most clearly and most significantly in its religion, and the type of religion will determine the

character of every department of its life including its science. Every attack of science on religion, therefore, says Spengler, recoils on science like a boomerang. In undermining its religion, science is digging its own grave. But the conflict between science and religion belongs to the period in which the culture is passing over into the civilisation: and religion and life avenge themselves before passing down into extinction, in this phenomenon of the second religiousness.

Here then history is made the be-all and end-all. It is not merely that science and philosophy cannot be adequately understood apart from history, it is that history is their very stuff and substance. ¹As Spengler says, "The claim of higher thought to possess general and eternal truths falls to the ground. Truths are truths only in relation to a particular mankind. Thus, my own philosophy is able to express and reflect *only* the Western (as distinct from the Classical, Indian, or other) soul, and that soul *only*, in its present civilised phase by which its conception of the world, its practical range and its sphere of effect are specified." He considers it to be the last great task of our civilisation to construct ²"a morphology of the exact sciences which shall discover how all laws, concepts and theories inwardly hang together as forms and what they have meant as such in the life-course of the Faustian Culture" (which is his name for our culture now passing into decline). Here then Schiller's well-known saying that the history of the world is the judgment of the world gains a strange and ironical significance.

And yet the question must be pressed, is history reached after all? Does man appear in this outlook? Are we

¹ *The Decline of the West*, Vol. I, English Translation, p. 46.

² *Ibid.*, p. 425.

confronted in history with anything essentially different from what we find in nature? Apparently not. Spengler says that the sphere of history is to be distinguished from that of nature, ¹“as to form, not substance.” The same rigid determinism holds, in history as well as in nature. We may perhaps pass by the paradox that the very interpretation which Spengler gives to history is itself an aspect of the culture in which he lives and moves. One indeed asks in perplexity, is this system of morphological relationships to be taken as objective truth, or is it simply the expression of a certain stage of a particular culture? Does this Western culture, in contra-distinction to all previous ones, strike up against general and universal truth in this interpretation of history, or does it merely give final expression to its own inner essence? Spengler's attitude to this question is curiously ambiguous. ²He says: “The morphology of world-history becomes inevitably a universal symbolism.” But symbolism of what? Of the real nature of world-history or of one particular phase, one culture, of world-history? He tells us in his preface: “I can then call the essence of what I have discovered ‘true’—that is, *true for me*, and as I believe, true for the leading minds of the coming time; not true in itself as dissociated from the conditions imposed by blood and by history, for that is impossible.”³ This “unphilosophical philosophy,”⁴ as Spengler calls it, is declared to be the true scepticism in the sense that it is real ‘skepsis,’ that is, *seeing*: but are we to be sceptical in this sense of the philosophy itself, are we to see it only as a subjective thing? Very elusive in this respect is Spengler's discussion of the relation of a morphology of world-history to philosophy. We under-

¹ *The Decline of the West*, Vol. I, p. 6.

³ *Ibid.*, p. xiii.

² *Ibid.*, p. 46.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

stand how it leads to the conclusion that there are no eternal truths, that every philosophy is the expression of its own time, "and—if by philosophy we mean effective philosophy and not academic triflings about judgment-forms, sense-categories and the like—no two ages possess the same philosophic intentions."¹ But is the truth in the light of which we reach this conclusion itself not an eternal truth, but only a truth relative to a particular stage of a particular culture?

But waiving for the moment this apparent contradiction and accepting provisionally this absolute historicism, we still press our question, is *history* really reached? We note first of all that these cultures which Spengler passes under review are completely independent of one another in their essential nature. They are not connected together in any causal way. Each culture arises from the unplumbed depths of life. They spring up like flowers in a garden. Between the cultures there is no continuity, but essential discontinuity. They all, however, follow the same laws, and they follow them so closely that a complete morphology of history can be constructed. But have we not here that very method of abstraction which is the method of physical science and on which Spengler pours so much philosophical scorn? Science, it has been often pointed out, cannot deal with the individual. It abstracts from the individual that which it has in common with other individuals, and on the basis of such abstraction constructs its picture of reality. Does not Spengler treat history in the same way? He pays attention, it is true, to the individual cultures, but only that he may abstract from them the features that they have in common. And within the particular culture itself, the individual phenomena are not regarded as significant in themselves,

¹ *The Decline of the West*, Vol. I, p. 41.

but only by virtue of the fact that they are all illustrations and manifestations of the soul-quality or the soul-shape belonging to the culture as a whole. The modern scientist would doubtless defend his method on the ground that real and practical results follow from it, that, to use Spengler's own words, he is able to work with nature as with a machine. And Spengler would defend his method on essentially the same ground, namely that it helps a man to live, that is to adjust himself to the epoch and stage in which his life is cast. But there is a serious deduction to be made from this apologetic. In science real results are forthcoming. Man is able to some extent, and indeed to a great extent, to make the powers of nature serve his own purposes ; in history he is not so able, for whether he sees the situation of his own epoch and adjusts himself to it, or whether he does not, is but incident, for he cannot bend history to his purposes, he cannot really utilise the powers and forces of history as he can those of nature. History confronts him at last as an iron-bound system, even more iron-bound than nature.

But there is another feature of Spengler's philosophy which calls for comment. It is that of periodicity. Each culture has its period of growth, maturity and decay, and this period is irrevocably fixed for it by an inner determinism. This is similar to the ancient view of history as cyclic and it is noteworthy that Spengler confesses his indebtedness to Nietzsche who preached the doctrine of eternal recurrence. Certainly Spengler's view is different from Nietzsche's, but fundamentally it is connected therewith. Now what is this idea of periodicity but a nature-concept? We are not arguing here that it is untrue. We are simply concerned to point out that if history be subject to the law of periodicity, and if this be

the last truth about it, it is in no essential way different from nature. If periodicity be true, then nothing really happens in history. We are not concerned with happenings, only with processes. The alleged event is but a point, a moment in a process. It is not wonderful that Spengler should end in complete scepticism. History with him is as dumb as nature. It never speaks, for nothing really happens.

But finally in this construction, real man is never reached at all. History is not the story of man. Man has no essential place in the scheme. For first of all, man's life is subject to an iron determinism. The determinism of law in nature becomes a dark and dreadful fate in history. Man cannot really respond to address, cannot really act, all he can do in the end, is to adjust his life to the determinations which govern its course. It is not *he* that counts, or *he* that acts. A certain mysticism hangs over the theory. Indeed Spengler's book is powerfully tinged with mysticism. He speaks much about the "All." He talks of a culture returning to its "spiritual home." And mysticism everywhere is the negation of history. Moreover, individuality and personality disappear in this construction, though they are everywhere spoken of, for a great creative personality is only a 'moment' in the process of a culture. He is not unique, for he can be seen as identical in substance with a personality in a parallel stage of another and previous culture. Pythagoras, Mahomet and Cromwell are but expressions of one and the same process. They appear as individualised concretions of the same process at a certain stage of its unfolding. If they are creative, it is only in the sense that they embody creative 'moments' in a process. The man as such, as individual, as personality is negligible. It is easy to see the influence on Spengler

of Nietzsche's conception of the superman. The superman is not really man at all, he is man simply as the outstanding instrument of an all-determining process, man as 'power,' as a mighty irresistible force which is not essentially different from a nature force. There are men, Spengler tells us, in whom the life-urge is dominant and all-compelling, who care nothing for truth or right, because they instinctively know that life has finally nothing to do with these abstractions. And on the other hand, there are those who renounce the world, who deny that the whole world-process has any ultimate validity or right, and who live in an invisible, metaphysical other world which has no continuity with the world of outward happenings. There are 'fact' men, and there are 'truth' men. These two types of men are, he tells us, whole men, men to be admired. It is those who fancy that the order of the world can be changed, who will neither whole-heartedly accept the world nor reject it, who are to be despised. "No faith yet has altered the world, and no fact can ever rebut a faith."¹ It is interesting to note that Spengler puts Jesus supreme among the 'truth' men, and speaks of him with great reverence and admiration. He was, says Spengler, metaphysical to the very core of his being. Historical actuality had no meaning for him, for his inner being lived wholly in the invisible, other world, and he never supposed for one moment that he could influence the course of history. For him empirical existence was not to be altered, improved and reformed but to be abrogated. It is strange how close Spengler comes here to that conception of revelation with which we have been dealing. One thing is lacking, a fundamental thing, and if it were present, it would make all the difference to this

¹ Vol. II, p. 216.

construction of history, namely any belief in the Holy Spirit. That term, a transcendent term indeed, would link up the invisible metaphysical world of transcendence with the world of historical actuality. This latter world would still retain a relative independence and autonomy of its own; and much of Spengler's historicism would be left standing, while as whole it would be brought under a revolutionising criticism and judgment far more thorough than any that could come from the side of philosophy. But for lack of that term, Spengler is thrown back upon the 'fact' man as alone expressing any reality with which we have to do. And the 'fact' man is not really human, he is but the instrument of a cosmic power which is none other at bottom than a nature power.

On all sides then, Spengler's philosophy sinks down into mere nature-science. His morphology of history is but nature-science writ large and moving in another element than that of nature. It is not necessarily on that account to be dismissed as untrue, but it is to be recognised in its true character. Everything is done to give history a meaning, and the final result is—essential meaninglessness. History is acclaimed as the one real science, regulating and evaluating all scientific activity, but real history is discovered at length not to be there. For what makes history history, namely man, is found to be merely a specified determination of a world-process; accordingly, a mere thing, a datum to be investigated, a concentration of force, an embodiment of natural law. And the very morphology of history which is supposed to be the supreme criticism of scientific abstraction, is found to be possible only in that field where such abstraction can fully express itself. Moreover this very morphology, as we have already said, is itself subject to the judgment of history. The world-process produces it, and then

apparently casts it away. Like all science it is but an instrument, and an instrument which has only temporal and relative value.

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Our justification for so lengthy a notice of Spengler's thesis, lies in the fact that it indicates the direction in which modern philosophy of history in general seems to be travelling. That is to say, the modern study of history taken in earnest is moving towards subjectivism, relativism and scepticism. Troeltsch for example, who was perhaps the outstanding champion of the attempt to discover transcendental truth in history, became more and more relativist, the further research and reflection led him. He espoused the idea of what he called "polymorphous truth," truth, that is, of many sides where the sides are so different from one another that they can never be brought together in the mind and consciousness of man. This truth is different for different times and different people. Nowhere is the absolute met with, and scarcely is any meeting of the absolute conceivable. The very mind of man seems to be different at different times and with different races and cultures. In other words we scarcely reach the concept 'man' at all; we have to do simply with men who are so different from one another in their world-outlook and world-feeling, that their nature can hardly be brought under a common category. Troeltsch believed that in this he yet succeeded in guarding himself against mere subjectivism and ultimate scepticism. But did he in principle? It is difficult to see how this is possible. Troeltsch maintained, to quote the words of Baron von Hügel, "that this chameleon-like truth—this truth utterly different for different times and races—is nevertheless Truth and Life in very deed, and forms

a reliable vehicle for God to man, and for man to God." "But," asks the Baron, pertinently indeed, "how can this be?"¹

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The fact is, that the direction pursued so remorselessly by Spengler and in a qualified sense by Troeltsch and the modern philosophy of history generally, must raise the question: are we not compelled to look beyond empirical history if we would discover real history? Is history as empirically known and empirically experienced, real history? Does not the frame-work of empiric history need to be broken through, before history in its real meaning and significance can arise? We may put the question in another form; is the empiric man, the man we know, real man? Has he yet attained true humanness? Are not the terms 'history' and 'man' terms which derive their true significance from beyond the world, from the transcendent order, and only from this world so far as this world has been met by another? Is not the true man only such in faith, in that totality act in which he steps, as it were, above and outside his empirical existence? And is not history real, only in so far as it stands in the light and the power of the resurrection, the new life which is above and beyond this life and which yet can become a real power in this life? In a word, is not Christ the one hope of the world? Is it not he and he alone who can give to history true actuality, and to man true humanity? We have an instinctive feeling that life, our own personal life, has about it a greater promise than it ever realises or can ever realise in its actual course; and that history holds a greater promise than the actual

¹ Introduction to Troeltsch's *Christian Thought*, by Baron von Hügel, p. xx.

course of history can manifest and express. But they hold that promise not in themselves—here Spengler and the relativists are right—but in virtue of the fact that between actual life and the actual world on the one hand, and real life and the real eternal world on the other, there is a link, there is a bond, in itself a transcendent link and bond, the Holy Spirit. It is that element in life and the world, not as a power working immanently in the evolution of history, but as a transcendent power whose nature is crisis and new creation which really brings to light the terms 'man' and 'history' in their true significance, and will not let us rest in any philosophy which would drag these terms down to mere nature concepts. And if it be true that life and history have more promise in them than can be realised in their actual course, if, in other words, the Holy Spirit be a reality, we shall turn to the tasks of life and history with new heart and hope. We shall not believe that what always has been, can prescribe what always must be. We shall believe that the new is always possible, and that real achievements can be secured. And at the same time our striving and our hope will not be at the mercy of the results which our efforts may achieve. We shall know that the consummation of history lies always beyond actual history, in the kingdom of God of which all that happens in time is but a collection of hints and parables. The mere idealist will be simply disillusioned and crushed when his projects and causes collapse. He will feel that he has been led on by a spirit of mockery and illusion; or if he search more deeply, he may feel with Spengler that a dark and mystic fate, against which there is no appeal, stands over the ways of men. But the man of faith, the man who knows that humanity has been touched by the power and promise of the Kingdom of God, will understand that the promise

of history lies always beyond its mere possibilities, and so he will continue at his tasks while life shall last. He will know that, however much he may achieve or however little, he will live and die in faith, "not having received the promises, but having seen them and greeted them from afar" (Hebrews xi, 13, R.V.)—he will live and die without having seen the real promise, the full and final promise of history. May we not see here the profound and devastating error of all merely secular idealism? There is a sense in which Spengler is justified in treating it with contempt. The secular idealist identifies the promise of history with the mere possibilities of history. He feels that there is no more in history than it is capable of realising and reaching in its actual course. And the result is that while secular idealism begins as idealism, it ends in a brutal and crushing tyranny, as we may see in the case of Russia to-day. Since history disappoints him, the secular idealist will by means of brute force strive to impose his ideals upon mankind. He will tyrannically attempt to make the world correspond to his ideals. But the man of faith knows that the promise of history far transcends any achievement which history can reach in its actual course. That understanding both makes him believe that real achievements are possible, and must therefore be striven for, and at the same time makes him understand that however things may turn out, whether in success or in failure, there is a great future beyond all time and history in which our broken achievements are gathered up, placed as it were in a new setting, and for ever secured. He will "learn to labour and to wait."

Our relativists then, such as Spengler and Troeltsch, are right in the sense that in the mere course of actual, empiric history, neither true history, nor true manhood openly discloses itself. These things are indeed there, because

Christ is there and the Holy Spirit is there, but no mere induction from history can reach the real essence of history. There may be much in actual fact which seems to support these inductions, but they no more give us a true picture of history, than the inductions of the scientists give us a true picture of nature. As world-views they rise and they pass, and Spengler is guided by a true instinct when he apprehends that his own historical world-view possesses only a relative validity and a passing significance. The true man is the "man from heaven," Jesus Christ, and the actual man is only the true man as he is united with Jesus Christ by faith; and the true history arises only in so far as actual history is capable of illustrating the power and reality of the Kingdom of God. How far it is capable of doing that, no man can say *a priori*. But that it is capable of doing it to some extent and to a very real extent, is a conviction that arises from the new understanding which faith brings, a conviction that arises from the mind of the Spirit. In Christ "there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free; but Christ is all and in all" (Col. iii, 11). And this, not simply because Christ is the all-inclusive man, but because he is the 'new' man, the man from heaven, and because in faith man stands as it were outside of and above his empiric humanity and becomes for the first time, true man. The same thought is contained in those great words in the Epistle to the Ephesians "he is our peace who hath made both (that is, Jew and Gentile) one" (Ephesians ii, 14). Man as Jew, and as Gentile, man in the empirical actuality of his life, is not yet real man. Only in faith, in Christ, in the Holy Spirit, does man stand outside and above his empirical existence and become for the first time really and truly man. The new man is not the actual man enlarged, the Jew or

the Gentile enlarged so as to include one another, but the actual man standing in the crisis of faith, the new man between whom and the old man there is no visible rational continuity but only transcendent divine continuity, that continuity which is expressed by the New Testament term the Holy Spirit. In that relation there lies a new possibility for history. The fact of Christ, the appearing of the new man from heaven, makes history in the true sense possible. Brunner has pointed out that the sense of history as we possess it, comes from Christianity. He says: "For the man of antiquity all temporal happening is a cyclic motion like the periodicity of nature; it has no beginning and no end. If you look at the totality of it you must say: nothing happens because the end is like the beginning, or better, there is neither end nor beginning. Time has no direction. If we Occidentals have another conception of history, it is because of Christianity. In fact, it is just that central importance of Jesus Christ in history, to which we have been pointing. Through faith in Jesus Christ, through this strange belief that eternity has appeared in time and truth has *become*, history acquires a middle, and with this middle a beginning and an end, consequently a definite direction. Jesus Christ, so the believer says, is the turning-point of time, and because of Him we see the world moving towards an end. By the fact that He enters time in the middle, with His absolute weight of eternity, time is stretched out, whilst before it was rolled up in a circle. Now something has happened for eternity, and through it the before and the after are no more meaningless, but infinitely significant. Through Him there is decision for the world and for every single man."¹

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¹ *The Word and the World*, pp. 54-55.

A contribution of real value for the Christian interpretation of history has been made by Barth in his conception of *Urgeschichte*.¹ It is unfortunate that we have no exact English equivalent for the word. ²Mr. Birch Hoyle renders the term 'pre-history.' The drawback of that rendering is that it brings the idea of time too much in the forefront and suggests that we are merely concerned with something which took place before history. ³Dr. McConnachie uses the term 'revelation-history' which is perhaps as good as any that may be found. Its only drawback is that it tends to suggest that a portion of history may be, merely as such, revelation. Super-history, corresponding to the significance of the word supernatural in the world of nature, would perhaps be the best term to use, were it not that the impression might gain currency that we have to do with something taking place in a region which never touches actual history, a transcendental world of ideas and forms after the Platonic model. By *Urgeschichte* is meant that point in actual and empirical history where reality in its approach to man, as it were, definitely arrives, where it speaks to man, makes him the subject of address, and elicits from him that response of faith in which his whole being is involved in crisis. Thus revelation is *urgeschichtlich*, super-historical. It is not historical in the ordinary sense, for no piece of history as such can be revelation. Nevertheless it is in history, for revelation is no mere mystical experience but a real coming of God, a divine event which is a world event. The idea of *Urgeschichte* seems to be necessary. For first, as we have seen, revelation is eschatological. It is an end event, not in the sense that it is the last event in an historical

¹ See Barth, *Dogmatik*, pp. 230-240.

² *The Theology of Karl Barth*.

³ *The Significance of Karl Barth*.

series, but in the sense that it is the once-for-all event, the intrusion into temporal history of the new world from above, the event which brings all history under crisis and judgment and disqualifies it as such for the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God is not the goal of historical evolution not the emergence of divine forces latent in the process of history. It is the new world of God, and must come, in and through the action of God Himself. The revelation event which betokens this is not therefore an historical but a super-historical, an *urgeschichtlich* event.

The same position is reached when we note the content of revelation. Revelation, as we have seen, is given in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. These events possess as revelation, a content and a meaning which do not belong to their character as historical events. The death of Christ is the divine atonement for human sin, the covering of the world's guilt and sin. But whence does it derive this tremendous significance? Clearly in no way from its character merely as an historical event. There can be no connection from any historical point of view between the death of a man and a final treatment of sin and guilt. Historically a death may be a great deed of human courage, devotion, sacrifice. It may possess a value for life in that it exerts a quickening and uplifting influence on those who hear about it and are affected by it. But that it should possess this supreme, all-decisive, final significance in relation to the world's sin and guilt is from the standpoint of mere historical consideration quite impossible.

It is clear, therefore, that in the death of Christ there is a divine significance which is quite other than its historic significance. The spiritual content of an historical event, the influences and effects which follow

it on the historical plane—all this is of a different nature from any content of revelation which may be in it. The revelatory content springs from the fact that it is the point at which a movement coming down from God and God's world arrives.

Since God comes down into the region of man's sin and death, draws infinitely near, places Himself where these things react upon Him, where they enter, we may say, into His experience, man's sin is covered and forgiveness and redemption assured. Inasmuch as God travels the distance which sin puts between man and Himself, inasmuch as by a miracle completely beyond human imagining, holiness comes right into the experience of a sinful race, then in the very midst of the evil there is the promise and the power of the good. But it is this divine coming, this travelling of the distance, this movement from the yonder to the here, which is the revelatory event, not the mere historical deed of heroism or sacrifice. Nevertheless the two are connected together. The historical content of the deed, and the *urgeschichtlich*, revelatory, super-historic, content bear a relation to one another. ¹The deed as heroism and sacrifice is not thrown away. Revelation makes it clear that human achievements have their value. History is shown to be no vale of illusion, no field of empty strivings, no region of futile achievement. History in the light of *Urgeschichte* is seen to possess value, meaning, purpose. But in the light of *Urgeschichte*, in its relation to *Urgeschichte*! Apart from that relation it possesses at last no meaning or value. But that relation exists and abides. The events and values of history stand in relation to the divine life and the divine righteousness. What then may we say about the nature of this relation?

¹ See note at end of Chapter.

First we may say, that in no way is historical event and historical value to be identified with divine event and divine value. The movements of history, even the greatest and the best, must not be identified with the movements of the Spirit of God. No event and no value is a pure creation of the Spirit. We may speak, of course, of God in history, but always with the proviso that God means one thing and history another. A divine movement *in* history is in reality a divine movement *to* history. The historical significance and content is different from the divine significance and content. Much too lightly do we speak of some specific movement in history as being of God, and therefore to be simply accepted, and whole-heartedly co-operated with. An historical movement may bear a very definite reference to the divine working, but experience alone will show that as it develops, it exhibits features and leads to results which are evil as well as good. It has continually to be acted upon both critically and creatively if it is really to maintain its divine reference. Apart from the infusion into it of critical and creative power from without and from above, it deteriorates, hardens, turns to evil. This can be seen in all the great and beneficent movements of of history. They have in spite of all their value a nusus towards evil. They cannot be allowed to run on, through their own momentum, evolve through their own innate life and power. The evolution of history is *per se* the evolution of sin. We may pause to note, by the way, what a double-edged weapon in the armoury of the religious apologist is the argument from development. That argument as used by Newman and the Catholic modernists in defence of the Roman Catholic Church is apt to turn itself against its users. The fact that a specific type of religion though different from its origins

is yet a genuine historical development therefrom, should bring it under careful scrutiny and criticism rather than secure for it prompt and ready acceptance and vindication. The argument from development is on the whole an argument against rather than an argument for. Everything historical is suspect, and under judgment. The divine and the historical are never identical.

We may say then that what man and history put into or draw from an event is never the same thing as what God puts into it or draws from it. And we may say moreover that the relation of the event, in its divine meaning and content, to the event in its historical meaning and content is always that of crisis and new creation. The event merely as historical event has, so to speak, to be done away, that it may become divine event. It must not simply evolve and carry on through its own momentum. Thus even the death of Christ must cease to be simply historical, simply a moving event of human heroism, sacrifice and obedience. It must as historical be infused with the creativeness of the Spirit, whereby its significance as divine event may reach man's consciousness, come home to him as judgment and bring to him grace, forgiveness and reconciliation with God. It must be lifted out of its context in the past, and become present, living word and power and spirit.

We conclude then that history is established in relative right, and its values and its goals are seen in the light of revelation to have a divine reference. Historical effort and achievement are very far from being vain and valueless. Historical progress is very far from being an empty dream. Real goals and real values may be, must be, sought in history and real achievements may be secured. And this precisely in virtue of the fact that over the whole of history stands the final crisis of *Urgeschichte*. Just

because of that, crisis is seen to be the very meaning of history, and crisis means new departure, new creation, progress. It will be seen, therefore, how much beside the mark is the criticism that the conception of *Urgeschichte* empties history of meaning and reduces the world to illusion. It is all the other way about. Meaninglessness, illusion, 'maya', are the last terms that can be applied to history in the light of *Urgeschichte*. In this light we may emphasize and indeed shout from the house-tops the words of the poet that "life is real, life is earnest," and this because we take so seriously the words which follow, "and the grave is not its goal." What does increasingly tend to empty history of meaning is precisely the historical temper and attitude. Where men take history in itself and strive by means of an induction from its course to construct a philosophy of history, just there relativism and essential meaninglessness begin to lift up their heads. And this is becoming increasingly evident to-day as we saw in our examination of Spengler and Troeltsch. But where history is set in critical and creative relation to *Urgeschichte*, it gains a meaning and a value which no mere induction can reveal in it.

And the further criticism¹ which has been made that since history has been thus emptied, it is impossible to get back behind it to *Urgeschichte*, falls to the ground. For we do not first empty history of meaning and then seek to get to some prototype of history called *Urgeschichte*. Our contention is that *Urgeschichte* has arrived, that revelation is here, and that therefore we see history both in its positive and negative significance. We are presented in the witness with a word and deed of God which take the form of an historical event whose divine content is yet other than its historical content. We find

¹ Criticism of Schreiner quoted by Birch Hoyle, p. 268.

a point of departure whereby we can see history in its relation to the Kingdom of God. In so far as history is negative, its negativity is seen in the light of the revelation event and seen in that light it turns into a new positivity. It draws its value not out of itself but out of its relation to the Kingdom of God, the *urgeschichtlich* fact and reality. What criticises history is precisely the Holy Spirit, the creativity of God, which will not let history just stand, or just evolve through the impetus of its immanent laws and forces. History as the point of departure for creative Spirit is alone real history.

NOTE.—By the historical content is meant that which the deed must possess for the observer, not, of course, that which it possesses for the doer. We do not mean that the death of Jesus was to himself simply a deed of sacrifice and martyrdom. The precise content which his death possessed for himself as historical man is, of course, impossible for us to determine. Precisely how he interpreted it we do not know, save that the evidence all points in the direction that he saw in it a deed of atoning obedience. Indeed how could he have done otherwise, since the event was really an *urgeschichtlich* event? But we mean that the event simply as it falls on the plane of history and works in an historical way, by means of historic effect and impression, cannot get beyond self-sacrifice, courage, martyrdom in its significance.

CHAPTER VII

THE SPIRIT AND GOD

THE doctrine of the Holy Spirit when taken in earnest leads to the conclusion that revelation means always and everywhere God Himself and God alone. Revelation is God Himself in person, God Himself speaking. Both in its giving and its receiving we have to do with the presence and the action of God Himself. No statements about God are as such revelation ; no statements, that is which may be taken and considered in themselves and apart from God Himself in His living, personal address to the soul of man, His personal light-bringing and response-creating action. All such statements arise from ideas and reflections which we draw out of the word of God, and their truth nature is always relative. Their value lies in the measure in which they are capable of becoming the materials for a direct word of God Himself which creates from man recognition and response. The word of God leads us indeed to make many statements about God, man, and the world. We build up from it a Christian philosophy and a Christian theology. But all this is in no way to be equated with revelation proper. It is, in so far as it is truth, truth *about* revelation, it is not revelation itself. The revelation is always the real presence and action of God becoming seen, known and responded to. Thus for example I may say, God communicates to man the forgiveness of sins in Jesus Christ. That is truth, but it is not yet revelation. To be revelation, God Himself must say this to a man directly, in and through the action on him of His Holy Spirit. We may put it thus : only when by the holding up of Jesus Christ in the word of the gospel, there is born in me the

recognition that I should not feel the sense of sin as I do, if the eternal righteousness were not drawing near to me and establishing contacts and connections with my life ; only when I awaken to the realisation that my sense of sin and my movement towards repentance are, in veriest reality, God the eternal righteousness coming right to me, and so on that very account are the movements of the divine love and mercy and pardon, do I receive revelation. I may say to a man, ' Your sense of sin is itself the word and promise of the divine forgiveness,' but my statement is not, as such, the word of God. Indeed considered as statement, it is highly dubious. It may *become* the word of God to him, but that is not in virtue of any truth or or value which it has merely in itself. Something must happen to him, something which I and my words cannot bring about, for the statement to become revelation. He has to hear it as God's word. The living truth, the living Spirit, has itself, has Himself, to become the truth. That is to say, revelation involves an action and a recognition and response which are wholly beyond the power of what we call truth to bring about. Through all our human words, the divine Spirit must function if there is to be revelation.

Once more : I may say that God becomes man in Jesus Christ, that in Christ we have the divine righteousness under the form of human temptability, the divine life under the form of human mortality. That is truth, but it is not yet revelation. Only when in the light of the gospel of the Incarnation, I awaken thoroughly to see that the call of temptation is itself the louder call of God, so that I shouldn't have this experience of temptation, of standing in strain and tension were not the eternal righteousness at work in my life—the very strength of the temptation being therefore on the other side of it the

power of God ; only when I recognise that my very sense of death betokens the presence of the new divine life ; only then, do I possess revelation and only then does the statement that God in Christ became man, that He assumed the form of human weakness, temptation and death, become the word of God. These statements are rationally and logically absurdities. The strength of temptation is logically the power of evil ; the sense of mortality is rationally the reaction set up in my mind by the fact of death. But these can be brought home to my consciousness in such a way that in and through them and belonging to them as their inseparable other side I find the power and the life of God. I cannot of myself bring these things home to my consciousness in this way, nor can any man do it for me. But it can get home to me in and through the word and the Spirit of a God become man in Christ, in and through the word of a divine righteousness and a divine life under the form of human temptability and death. The statement that God becomes man is not then in itself revelation to me. Only as something happens to me, only as the truth becomes reality, only as God Himself speaks through His Spirit does revelation appear. Revelation cannot be considered apart from the word of God, that is, apart from God Himself speaking. And all truth which is germane to revelation is truth which arises out of the aim and purpose that God Himself should speak. The first thing then that we are led to say about God in the light of the Holy Spirit is that revelation is God, and God *is* what we mean by revelation.

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Let us pursue this truth that God is revelation, and revelation is God a little further. Though we have to

speak of revelation in the most objective way conceivable, we are yet unable to regard it from any purely objective point of view. It is not objective in the sense that it is just there, a fact of observation, a datum for dispassionate scientific investigation. It is not a body of truth which we can, as it were, sit down before, and proceed from our side to examine and assimilate, so that the two acts, the giving and the receiving might be considered entirely apart from one another. The conception of revelation as purely objective in this sense, leads to orthodoxy, where a body of statement purporting to be the truth of God is accepted on the authority of Church or Bible and defended on more or less rationalistic grounds. Orthodoxy is constantly driven to come to terms with rationalism, because it is itself an intellectualist thing ; it is addressed to the rational understanding and demands the assent of the reason as such. It must build upon a sub-structure of rational knowledge and claim to complete the building which reason because of its deficiencies leaves unfinished. But orthodoxy can never be on comfortable terms with reason, because its subject-matter is transcendent and miraculous ; and at last it collapses before rationalism because though addressed to reason it is "withdrawn from the criticism of the understanding" (Forsyth). The Holy Spirit in orthodoxy is no vital and organic principle. It is a supernaturalism brought in, as it were, to sanction the decisions of orthodoxy. 'Here is revelation,' it is said, 'we can express it in a detailed scheme of truth, a body of doctrine, and if you are willing to hear, if you have the will to believe what God has revealed, the Holy Spirit will enlighten your understanding and enable you to do so ?' The Holy Spirit is not, as such, the truth, but some supernatural power which enables a man to accept a body of doctrine whose nature is

intellectual and rational. But when we enquire more closely into the relation between the Holy Spirit and this body of statement which is put forward as revelation, we are met with further statements which have to be substantiated either on rational grounds or grounds of external authority.

But if we may not speak of revelation with pure objectivity neither may we speak of it with pure subjectivity. Revelation is not simply an experience within the soul which finds intellectual and rational expression as a body of truth. That puts revelation continually at the mercy of psychology. The experience becomes a datum for psychological investigation, and finds itself continually called in question with regard to its objective reference. Where revelation is equated with inner experience, the question as to how this experience is to be evaluated and judged will always remain—a question. Much that has been advanced in the past as truth from the side of experience is now relegated to the realm of illusion by the advance of psychological science. Moreover if revelation be identical with experience, the truth element is always secondary and relative. It depends upon the measure of adequacy with which the experience is evaluated and rationalised. But revelation is truth. The Spirit is not a mere experience from which truth may be deduced—*der Geist ist die Wahrheit* (Barth). It is not the fact of experience which is the real significance but the ‘what’ of experience. Furthermore, as the champions of orthodox dogma are not slow to point out, if it is true to say that dogma arises from experience, it is no less true to say that experience arises from dogma. Often it is positive belief that creates experience rather than the experience creating the belief.

Yet another consideration of vital importance comes into

view at this point. How can experience simply as such be taken as the datum for estimating the truth of revelation when what we have in view, according to the witness, is a real coming of God to the *world*, and the divine action on the scale of the *world*? How can experience in itself yield the truth that in the Cross of Christ we have a final treatment of the sin of the world? How do I reach from my personal experience of forgiveness and reconciliation with God the great conclusion that God was in Christ reconciling the *world* unto Himself? Is that great truth an inference, an induction from my experience? But what entitles experience to make so vast and far-reaching a statement? If I am confronted with a great word which speaks of God's action on a world scale, that word can certainly come home to me and create a response in me; but I cannot take my experience, regarded as something which I possess and enjoy, and make it a kind of datum from which to establish the reality and to formulate the nature of this great world act. I must take the word itself, strive to draw out its implications for thought and life, see the world in its light, and on grounds which are far wider than anything which I can directly experience, confess the truth of it. In so doing my own experience will be enlarged and deepened; indeed new experiences will be created within me, new insights and understandings. But this will not take place if I simply start with experience as a datum and from that proceed to formulate truth. My response to the word of God is a far bigger thing than anything that can come directly out of experience. That is why we call faith a miracle and refuse to identify it with any mere religious *a priori*. It is the Holy Spirit; a power and a faculty which revelation itself must bring.

The current preoccupation with experience has become

a source of weakness in modern theology. Dr. Tennant, who is certainly no rigid dogmatist declares that the extraction of theological doctrine out of religious experience supposed to be devoid of dogmatic ingredient must be in vain. ¹He says: "Distinctively Christian religiousness is determined by distinctively Christian doctrine; Christianity is neither a doctrine nor a life, but a life coloured by a doctrine." It is a weakness of Schaefer's fine book on the Spirit that it makes almost an identity between the Spirit and the experience of faith. He is thus led to make statements about experience which experience itself will find it difficult to sustain. When he tells us that the experience of faith is that of being unconditionally bound and unconditionally freed, bound absolutely in obedience to God and freed absolutely for service to men, one wonders whose experience he is talking about. What man will venture to say so much of his own experience? To build Christian truth on such an experience is a somewhat oppressive undertaking in view of the actual facts of experience. What is needed if we are to have revelation is something that will create experience, and create it in such a way that experience will cease to be preoccupied with itself, but will lose sight of itself in its object.

May we then say that revelation continually moves between the poles of objectivity and subjectivity? May we put it thus: the belief creates an experience, and then the experience while validating the belief with regard to its inner content, criticises it as to its form, and strives to reinterpret the belief, to set it out in worthier and more adequate forms of expression? In a sense we may certainly say this. Revelation as truth, and revelation as experience, act and react on one another, the experience

¹ *Philosophical Theology*, Vol. I, p. 327.

clarifying the truth, and the truth as clarified deepening the experience, and so on in continual and mutual reciprocity. Only we need the proviso that it is not experience in itself which supplies the criterion for the validity of the interpretation, but that element in the truth, no doubt clarified by experience and reflection, which calls *to* experience and makes it a constant standing in decision and response. What is given to us in revelation is neither belief as such, nor experience as such, but God Himself in personal action, that is, as we have seen God Himself in address to us. Action means that we are addressed. We have not an experience to be evaluated, but a response to make. We cannot take revelation as a datum, a fact of history or a truth of reason, or a state of experience, and then give it a value which we call revelation. We are ourselves personally involved and wholly involved, and involved in constant crisis and decision. We do not postulate, and we do not evaluate, and we do not rationalise, we respond. And our response is not just a response which we make, it is the response of ourselves. It is ourselves as response. In this response we find our true being. And the truth of revelation, its content for thought, its material of belief belongs to the order of truth and idea which is involved in this response of life. It is, to use a term of Kierkegaard which is becoming once more current in theology "existential truth," an order of truth, that is, which cannot be received merely by way of rational assent, but only by way of life-decision. It is a kind of truth which in order to be seen in its true-ness and reality has to *become* truth to a man. In that respect it may be compared to poetic or artistic truth, which cannot be conveyed from man to man in mere abstract, intellectualised propositions but has to be seen and felt, and must elicit a response from

the life-force of a man's own being. Only, in revelation the response is no mere affective or emotional thing but a standing decision of the life. The presupposition of the modern man, says Brunner, "is that there is only one kind of truth, viz., objective impersonal truth which can be proved," and that presupposition "excludes for him all truth which cannot and ought not to be proved because it has to be appropriated in personal decision."¹

Revelation therefore is a category which transcends the antithesis of objective and subjective. Its nature is miracle both as to its giving and as to its receiving. It belongs to the mind of the Spirit. There is a continuity between God and man by means of which the truth of God can be conveyed to the mind of man. But this continuity is not an immanent nexus between God and man. It is wholly divine and transcendent. It is not discoverable in man, but in God alone. It is the Holy Spirit. What unites man to God is not participation in a common nature which can be seen, as it were, from both sides, the manward side and the Godward side. It can be seen only from the Godward side. Revelation therefore cannot be the mere disclosure of truth which man is to receive, it must be the establishing and effectuating of this continuity, this bond, wherein and whereby man may perceive the truth as truth. Only within this bond which, be it repeated, is divine and transcendent, can revelation appear. "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost" (1 Cor. xii, 3). We therefore reach our conclusion again, that God is Himself revelation, and that revelation *is* what we mean by God.

But though revelation cannot be treated either with pure objectivity or with pure subjectivity, we must in the intellectual and doctrinal formulation of revelation,

¹ *The Word and the World*, p. 62.

begin with the subjective side. But let it be well understood that we do not mean by that, beginning with mere subjective experience, and then from an inspection of that passing on to a formulation of objective truth. What we mean is that we begin by asking what light revelation throws on us, and our world, and the final relationships in which our life stands, before we pass on to discuss in any objective way the nature of God. We must understand how we are to see ourselves and our world, before we pass on to any attempts theoretically to formulate a doctrine of God. If we are to speak objectively of God, we must first see ourselves in God's light. Our knowledge of God consists in the knowledge that we ourselves are known of God. "Now that ye have come to know God or rather to be known of God" (Galatians iv, 9 R.V.). We know God objectively, so far as objective knowledge of Him can be spoken of at all, only in proportion as we come to know ourselves and our world objectively, that is, from the side of God.¹ It is for this reason that we have dealt in this discussion with miracle, reason, and history, from the point of view of the New Testament conception of the Holy Spirit, before attempting in this chapter to speak of God from this same point of view. It is only on the basis of a treatment of these former themes that we may, with great reserve, proceed to make God the direct object of our thought so far as definite doctrinal statement is concerned. What then may we now go on to say about God?

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Now the first thing we can say is this: the revelation of God as miracle is the end of all modalism. Modalism

¹ See Forsyth, *The Principle of Authority*, pp. 103 and 111, *et passim*.

as it arose in the early church as associated especially with the name of Sabellius, and as it has been given modern expression by Schleiermacher, teaches that God can be conceived of as having manifested Himself under modes or aspects. In relation to the doctrine of the Trinity, Father, Son and Spirit do not stand for immanent and eternal distinctions and relations within the being of God, they are but aspects seen by us of the one God ! and these aspects can be, as it were, taken apart from one another and studied objectively. Seen from one side, God is Father, from another Son, and from another Holy Spirit. We are not here directly concerned with modalism in the form which it took in Sabellianism and the modalistic controversies of the ancient church ; we are concerned with the modalistic outlook as it permeates much of our modern thinking about God. Modern philosophical theism has a strong tendency to some form of modalism, because it tends to interpret God and the world primarily in terms of degrees of reality and value, and to make the life of the universe an expression of the experience of God. It tends, that is, to make the universe as necessary to God, as God is to the universe. We have an ascending series of grades or stages of reality leading up from the most elementary and rudimentary objects of experience to God and accordingly at each level we have an expression of some mode of God's life and experience. The teaching of Sabellius himself, though the reports of it which we possess are confused and contradictory, seems to be fairly clear in its main outlines. He taught that Father, Son and the Holy Spirit were the same. The one God revealed himself in three aspects (*prosopa*), and these three aspects corresponded with the stages in the history of creation and salvation. It was not, as Harnack has pointed out, that behind these three

aspects there was a divine reality (monas) which could be considered apart from its manifestations. Nor was it that these three aspects abide eternally as forms under which God may be considered. To quote Harnack: "Sabellius taught—according to Epiphanius and Athanasius—that God was not at the same time Father and Son; but that he had, rather, put forth his activity in three successive 'energies'; first, in the Prosopon (= form of manifestation, figure; not = Hypostasis) of the Father as Creator and Lawgiver, secondly, in the Prosopon of the Son as Redeemer, beginning with the incarnation, and ending at the ascension, finally, and up till the present hour, in the Prosopon of the Spirit as giver and sustainer of life." And he adds "We do not know whether Sabellius was able strictly to carry out the idea of the strict succession of the Prosopa, so that the one should form the boundary of the other. It is possible, indeed it is not improbable that he could not fail to recognise in nature a continuous energy of God as Father."¹ Still it seems evident that in the teaching of Sabellius the Father did not remain Father after his unfolding in the Son, nor apparently did the Son remain the Son after His unfolding in the Spirit. There was a real evolution in the being of God, corresponding with the evolution of the world in creation and redemption. Harnack notes that "while up to this time no evident bond had connected cosmology and soteriology within modalistic theology, Sabellius now made the histories of the world and salvation into a history of the God who revealed himself in them." Here then, we have God definitely involved in the time-process and unfolding Himself, because as it were expressing Himself, living out His experience and history in the stages of that

¹ *History of Dogma*, Vol. III, p. 85.

process. The way is prepared for modern immanentism and even modern pantheism. It is well-known how closely Schleiermacher the great modern Sabellian, and the pioneer of modern religious liberalism, approximated to pantheistic conceptions of God.

But modalism in all its forms is fatal to the conception of God given the New Testament witness to revelation. For first of all, modalism for all its involving of God in the time-process makes revelation essentially unhistorical. God becomes seen in different aspects as history unfolds ; there are degrees of revelation in life and history, but revelation is none the less essentially unhistorical. There is no supreme divine event in which God gives Himself once for all, no all-decisive happening in history and upon history, no coming down from above, no final movement from the 'there' to the 'here'. There are, indeed, divine disclosures which are parallel with the growth and development of our life. The world is illumined by a supernatural light, and now one colour and now another is seen as that light is reflected through the prism of our life, but the world is not overcome. All that history does, all that historical personalities do, all that even Jesus Christ can do, is to stimulate awareness to God, to deepen man's own native God-consciousness, to start into activity certain immanent tendencies and powers within the soul of man. And the more strongly these powers are stirred, the more can history be left behind. Even Jesus Christ remains at last but the classic illustration of man's awareness of God, the point at which the God-consciousness rose into supreme realisation and manifestation, the figure of our race whose value for us is that He stimulates our own nascent perception of God. But nothing really happens in Him. God does not personally and decisively act for our salvation and the

salvation of the world. Christ remains at last our helper only, and not our Saviour. Modalism is monistic and at last pantheistic. God tends to become identified with the universe and its evolution. He is our environment, an all-pervading presence, and we become increasingly conscious of Him as we become conscious of our world in its totality. In Schleiermacher the universe and God tend to become interchangeable terms.

Moreover modalism tends to relativism. Inasmuch as God is given only under modes and aspects of His being, there is no room for an absolute and final revelation. There is no sure and immutable word of God to man, nothing given and nothing done once and for all, no final, eschatological happening, no being *in* Christ, fixed and founded, rooted and grounded and growing up *into* Him.

Modalism means essentially and at the last exclusively immanence. In Sabellianism the conceptions of the Father and the Son tended to be left behind. They corresponded with dispensations or economies of revelation which belonged to the past. Men were now living in the era of the Spirit, and the Spirit was an expression of the Deity in which the other expressions were swallowed up. The Church instinctively felt this to be fatal to its life. It meant the setting aside of God's transcendence in the interest of His immanence, the divorcing of revelation from history, and the making of it a mere matter of inner experience, the relegating of Christ Himself to a secondary and relative and finally outgrown position in the economy of revelation. And in the modern era, the doctrine of the Spirit tends to become more and more preached in the interest of an immanent conception of God. Indeed it is one of the major ironies of history, that the idea of the Holy Spirit, which in the New Testament is entirely transcendent (though

inward) and which is there above all to guard the transcendence of God in His revelation, should have become the main plank in a theology of immanence. This fact alone is sufficient to give us pause. It indicates how easy it is, in the praiseworthy attempt to reinterpret Christian doctrine for the purpose of commending it to the modern mind, to fall into conceptions which are the precise opposite of those which the original doctrine was framed to commend and safeguard.

It may seem paradoxical to maintain that modalism is the attempt to treat God with pure objectivity, to regard Him as a mere datum presented to consciousness, which the consciousness can investigate and evaluate. But the paradox is only apparent. In modalism, particularly in its modern forms, God is given as object and not as subject. His revelation of Himself is identified more or less closely with the unfolding or evolution of the world as that falls within the sphere of consciousness. He becomes a mode, or an abstraction, from that which is presented for our rational thought and enquiry. Modalism is the objective, scientific method imported into theology. The scientific mind when it becomes religious is nearly always modalistic. It tends towards a non-miraculous, non-historical 'spiritual' religion, a religion which is an attempt to read the 'whole', the Universe, with spiritual eyes. The spiritual becomes the final valuation of the world. Revelation is the aspect of the world in its spiritual significance and meaning. All science proceeds by way of abstraction. It deals not with the thing in itself, not with the thing in its individuality and uniqueness, but with those aspects of the thing which are capable of being worked up into laws and generalisations. So God becomes, as it were, an abstraction from the world in its totality, a mode or aspect revealing the spiritual

meaning and drift and value of the whole. Historical events and historical personalities become illustrations, manifestations and concretions of the spiritual which is immanent in the world. Jesus Christ Himself is but the supreme, the unique instance of this manifestation, this concretion. Schleiermacher found in the modalistic idea a fruitful instrument for commending religion to the educated world of his day, and his method has been widely adopted by liberal religious thinkers. But modalism is an illegitimate surrender to the scientific method. It is the abandonment of that which makes revelation truly revelation, namely miracle and history. It tends to lose God in the cosmic process, and to dissolve revelation in the general religious consciousness of mankind.

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But the second thing that we can say is that the revelation of God in the light of the Holy Spirit is the end of deism on the one hand, and pantheism on the other. We have sharply marked off our view of revelation from that deism and dualism with which it is sometimes charged, and it is not necessary to repeat what has already been said. All that needs to be added here is that deism deals with the idea of God from the standpoint of pure objectivity, and we have already shown that from that standpoint He cannot be regarded. In deism God remains the pure object of thought, and His existence is established on entirely rational grounds. He is inferred from the existence and nature of the world, and His revelation has to be established on grounds of prophecy and miracle, or on such similar grounds as must be vindicated by rational investigation and demonstration.

Our distance from Him is a distance in space and time. It is separation. Whereas in revelation our distance is alienation, that is, it is a distance set up by His own will and judgment. The element of truth in deism is, as we have elsewhere pointed out, that the world of our knowledge and experience is a relatively independent, autonomous, planted-out world. Its laws and working cannot be immediately referred to the will of God. But this very autonomy betokens the presence of evil in it, shows that it must be regarded as a fallen world, and makes it impossible at the last to reach God save in and through His own revelation. Deism, however, does not construe the world's autonomy after that fashion. It regards it as a datum from which by process of enquiry and reason we can immediately reach the reality and nature of God. Accordingly it knows nothing of revelation as we have conceived it. Revelation is made to consist in a number of truths and ideas which have to be established on independent grounds of reason. There is no immediacy of God to man in revelation and therefore no Holy Spirit.

It will scarcely be necessary to emphasize the incompatibility of the God of revelation with pantheism. Pantheism identifies God with the world, and makes the movement of revelation to be the immanent movement of the world's own life. The Holy Spirit becomes thus simply the world-soul. There is no word of God to the world, but only the word of the world about itself. All transcendence is lost in immanence. Pantheism is of course a philosophical possibility, but from the point of view of revelation as we have conceived it, we need not pursue discussion of it any further.

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The next thing which we are able to say about God in the light of the Holy Spirit, is that He is the Absolute. By this we do not mean that He is to be identified with the philosophical absolute in which all distinctions disappear. The philosophical absolute is not God, for it is impersonal. Nor may we say that though the absolute is not God,¹ "it contains God with all finite personalities and the objective universe," unless we simply mean by the absolute "the totality of the existent" (Tennant). The philosophical absolute cannot be adjusted to God, it disappears as such in God. "In him (not in the philosophical absolute) we live and move and have our being." The distinctions and differentiations in our experience which the philosophical absolute is called on to remove, point to certain immanent inalienable distinctions with the being of God. Nature, history, and the individual life are, as it were, parables of the Eternal Being of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The Absolute in revelation is an absolute of eternal relations. There is ultimately no room for an absolute besides God Himself. It is God Who is to be "all in all" (1 Cor. xv, 28). In union with God, in finding a place within those eternal relationships which make up the being of God, all reality must at last stand. The God of revelation, of miracle, of the Holy Spirit, is the end, by which we mean the crisis of philosophical absolutism. Philosophical absolutism from the point of view of revelation, is an idea which is reached from the wrong end. It is reached from the idea of rational unity. Not thus can truth in its absoluteness be attained. For this, it is necessary to begin not with unity as a rational idea, but with the unity of God in His revelation, with the Holy Spirit.

¹ Valentine, *Modern Psychology and the Validity of Christian Experience*, p. 78.

It may be remarked here that the 'rationale' of the doctrine of the Trinity is to be found in the idea of the Holy Spirit; not in that of the Son as such, but in that of the Spirit. Historically, no doubt the doctrine of the Trinity arose out of Christology. It was because men saw in Christ no mere man, but the incarnation of God, that they were led on to postulate eternal distinctions within the divine being. There was God in His transcendence, His eternity, and God in His manifestation, His appearance on the plane of time and history: at least, therefore a binity, a 'two-ness'. And there are still theologians who are somewhat attracted to the idea of a binity rather than a trinity. It seems to them that the conception of a Trinity arose out of a supposed necessity, for which there appears no sufficient ground in revelation, to fit the Holy Spirit into this idea of immanent and eternal distinctions within the Godhead. The Holy Spirit may, they think, be regarded as the unity of the 'two-ness', the transcendence of the subject-object relation in God implied by the terms Father and Son, and not as a distinct hypostasis. The Holy Spirit, from this point of view becomes in revelation, an influence, resulting from the Incarnation, a spiritual and divine power working in the hearts of men and flowing from the divine deed of the Incarnation. But this is to drag God down into the temporal process, to make revelation a temporal thing, to involve it in the sequences of history. Faith becomes the temporal and sequential result of the appearance of Jesus in the world. We are really back again at the idea of a great historical personality and activity, producing impressions and exercising a dynamic influence upon his contemporaries and successors. But faith is, as we have seen, a transcendent thing, a miracle, something which in its essence is not a matter of temporal causation, and

therefore the idea of a binity cannot stand. It cannot in the long run resist some form of modalism. We see the Son only in and through the Spirit, and therefore the Spirit becomes the true 'rationale' of the Trinity.

The conception of God as the Absolute, not in the philosophic sense, but in the sense of revelation, in which the philosophic absolute as such disappears, means that God is above all the *Lord*. He is not the world ground, but the world Lord; or rather we may say, we reach the thought of Him as world ground via the revelation of Him as world Lord. All attempts to reach God as rational ground of the world, or as philosophic absolute rise from regarding Him as object and not as subject. But what we are confronted with in revelation is a supreme subject, and not a rationally conceived object. That means, that the world, as such, is not accepted in revelation, not rationalised and evaluated but brought into crisis and overcome. It is lifted out of that contradiction in which it stands, newly constituted and thus restored to its original meaning, and its true definition. It has a Lord.

"The ground plan of creation is redemption" (Forsyth). Therefore it is not discoverable by rational thought or intuitive insight but in and through divine revelation. We are presented first and foremost not with a world-ground or a world-reason but with a divine and personal Redeemer and Lord. And we interpret God as the ground of the world in the light of that revelation wherein He comes home as the Lord of the world. It is the sovereignty of God, understood thus, which is the germinal principle of all revelation.

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From the revelation of God as Sovereign arises the

thought of Him as Creator. The sequence of thought in revelation is not that God is the Lord of the world because He is the world's Creator, but *vice versa*, that God must be thought of as the Creator of the world because He is its Lord. He who stands over the world, bringing it into crisis, judgment and redemption, is its owner, source, maker. None but the Creator can redeem. It is noticeable that the second Isaiah, the great old Testament prophet of redemption, whose dominant idea is that of the absolute Lordship and Sovereignty of God speaks in most moving and majestic language of the work of God in creation. Throughout the entire book runs the theme of the divine sovereignty: "I am the Lord and there is none else." The far places of the earth are to behold the manifestation of His sovereignty in the redemption of His elect people Israel. The heathen conqueror Cyrus is to be the chosen instrument of the sovereign purpose of God. And the vision of Israel's restoration, Israel's redemption, broadens out into the idea of a new world in which nature itself serves the interests of the redeemed community, for nature itself shall be transformed. "Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree: and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off" (Isaiah lv. 13). The idea of God's Lordship takes on an eschatological colour; it expresses itself in the picture of a great deed of world salvation. And the eschatology is all the more impressive in that it is entirely free of fantastic mythology. The new thing which the Lord will do, will cast all His previous mighty acts into the shade. "Remember ye not the former things, neither consider the things of old. Behold I will do a new thing; now shall it spring forth; shall ye not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert" (Isaiah

xliii, 18-19). The idols are seen in all their utter emptiness, all their unspeakable futility. They are empty and vain. Of the idol-worshipper it is said "He feedeth on ashes ; a deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand ?" (Isaiah xliv, 20). The prophet's mind is absolutely dominated by a supreme incommunicable, unshared lordship which makes all that is merely human relative and temporal, mere grass that withers and perishes : " All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field : the grass withereth, the flower fadeth : because the spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it ; surely the people is grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth : but the word of our God shall stand for ever " (Isaiah xl, 6-8). And because his mind is thus dominated by God as Lord, he speaks with unrivalled majesty and power of God as Creator. " Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number : he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power ; not one faileth. . . . Hast thou not known ? hast thou not heard that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary ? there is no searching of his understanding " (Isaiah xl, 26 and 28). " Thus saith God the Lord, he that created the heavens, and stretched them out ; he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it, he that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein " (Isaiah xlii, 5). " I have made the earth, and created man upon it : I, even my hands, have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded " (Isaiah xlv, 12). " For thus saith the Lord that created the heavens ; God Himself that formed the earth and made it ; he hath established it,

he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited : I am the Lord ; and there is none else ” (Isaiah xlv, 18).

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Now from the conception of God as Lord, and as Creator because Lord, arise the idea of omnipotence, omniscence, and omnipresence. Omnipotence is not nature-power or world-power raised to highest terms. It is that which brings down all word-power, which judges it and abolishes it. Omnipotence does not mean that what we call power and experience as power is raised to highest terms, not that it simply passes beyond the limits which it encounters in our experience, but that it is brought to naught. Omnipotence is not just *more* power, but *new* power, a power of a new order, which robs what we call power of its *power*. The distinction between the world's power and God's power is not quantitative but qualitative. A new power arises, which alone is the real power, and which finally negates and brings to death all that we mean by power. Our life is under the dominion of alien power, or rather alienated power. The powers of nature and of man have become detached from the power of God. They are to be set aside in the day of the Lord. “ The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ ; and he shall reign for ever and ever ” (Revelation xi, 15). The omnipotence of God is the power of Christ's resurrection ; “ the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come ; and hath put all

things under his feet" (Ephesians i, 19-21). So similarly is it with the Divine omniscience. This again is not our reason and our knowledge extended to infinity. The omniscience of God is the disqualifying of our knowledge as such. "Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?" (1 Cor. i, 20). Knowledge, as we understand it, is a temporary thing, it belongs to this world, a world which is to be overcome, and therefore it is to be done away. "Whether there be knowledge it shall vanish away" (1 Cor. xiii, 8). It is but a human and temporary adumbration of that 'love' which is above the mere *gifts* of the Spirit; which is the actual consciousness of the Spirit made man's in revelation. The omniscience of God means not simply that God knows more than we, but that He knows otherwise than we; and because he knows otherwise than we, "he knoweth all things." Omnipotence and omniscience are not rational terms. They are revelation terms, Holy Spirit terms. We may not use them as major premisses for the purposes of logical deduction. We may not say, if God is omnipotent, then why does this or that happen in the world, or if he be omniscient where is the place for human freedom? To speak thus, is to treat omnipotence and omniscience as mere extensions of what we mean by power, and what we mean by knowledge. But our conceptions of power and knowledge are only relative. They are congruous with the world now standing, but not with the God who is other than the world.

And so with omnipresence. This does not mean that God pervades time and space like a spiritual ether. It means that He stands above time and space with all their limitations. It means that the space-time system belongs to a world which in revelation stands in crisis, a world to

be overcome. It implies a new world-order made manifest in Jesus Christ, but made manifest in its relation to our world-order as death and resurrection. The world "passeth away." It is included in the life of God, because as it now exists, as a space-time system it is concluded.

Finally, Lordship means Tri-unity. Lordship implies relation, and absolute Lordship means absolute relation. God is the Lord, because He is Father, Son and Spirit, and in Himself as such; thus not modalistically nor economically, but immanently and eternally. Because He is the Father of the Son, he can create a world without setting up an absolute which is other than Himself. He can set up, that is, a relation which shall be included in and not fall outside the relations within His own being. The great cosmic conceptions of Christ which are articulated specially in the epistles to the Ephesians and the Colossians are no part of a mere historic and temporary world-view, they belong to the spiritual dialectic of revelation. "For by him (the Son) were all things created, that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist (hold together)" (Colossians i, 16-17). With us, creation is the expression of a thought in and through a material which is outside of ourselves. With God, creation is the expression of a purpose which is the eternal, generative relation in which the Father stands to the Son. God then is the Creator because He is the eternal and absolute Father, "from whom every fatherhood in heaven and on earth is named" (Ephesians iii, 15, R.V. margin). And because God is also the Son of the Father, He can become man without any diminution of His transcendent deity. The world into which he enters is a world, which though actually and

empirically fallen and in contradiction, is yet His own world, the world created in Him and for Him, a world therefore which in its true reality abides within that relation which the Son bears to the Father. The Son can therefore approach it, though that approach will be hidden from sense and sight, and apprehended only by that transcendent relation which we call faith. For Him to make His presence visible on this side of the contradiction of the world to God, would be to divest Himself of his Godhead. He must take on Himself the form of a servant, and be made in the likeness of men. Only as He is, only as the Eternal reality of that relation in which the world stands to God, can He be truly seen ; only as the world's *restored* relation to God, not as the world's actual empirical relation. He has to take our manhood into Himself, that is, to abolish our actual empirical manhood, to carry it through death to resurrection, and so restore it to its first estate.

And because God is the Spirit of the Son and of the Father, He can be bestowed upon and received by fallen and sinful man, man in contradiction, without in any way surrendering His transcendence, His unknowableness by those powers and faculties which belong to man on his natural and human levels. Man can even here and now possess a God-consciousness which is no mere awareness of God as an object, but which is a veritable functioning of the consciousness of God Himself within the mind of man. He can attain a new kind of knowledge which transcends the subject-object relation from which his rational knowledge arises ; while yet that new knowledge brings no fusion with the mind of God, no sinking of man's mind in the ocean of universal mind and consciousness, no blotting out of that deep and unsurpassable distinction between the human and the divine. It is this

to which the writer of the Epistle to the Ephesians refers when he says "that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God" (Ephesians iii, 16-19). Suffused with deep and passionate emotion as this passage is, we should make a great mistake if we supposed that any word in it is set down without thought and without definite meaning. The knowledge of which the writer speaks is the very movement within man's consciousness of the Spirit, that is of the consciousness of God. It is knowledge which opens the meaning of the infinities and the eternities. It is knowledge of the eternal love which is the very being of God, the love in which the fulness of the eternal relationships within God Himself abides. It is the knowledge which comes of being known by God with that knowledge which God has of Himself, that is of being loved by God with that love which is the deep movement of His own life. Faith has its own dialectic which is other than the dialectic of reason, and which transcends every mere subject-object relation. In faith, in the Holy Spirit man no longer knows himself as an independent autonomous being at all, he knows himself only in God, while he yet knows that God remains God and man remains man to all eternity.

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The doctrine of the Trinity means supremely that God is love. Far above any attributes which we may ascribe

to Him in virtue of His relation to the world, stands His essence which is love. It is not merely that God loves, it is that He Himself is love. His being is an eternal movement in love. The doctrine of the Trinity alone ultimately safeguards the truth that God's nature is love. It is not merely that the subject and the object of God's love are within His own being, thus making His love an eternal thing, something which belongs to His nature as such, and not a mere attitude or disposition which He takes up. The mere relation of Father and Son would mean simply that God loves Himself. But God does not simply love Himself, He loves *in* Himself. That is to say, besides the subject-object relation, the relation of Father and Son, there is yet another which involves that God can love that which is not Himself with the same love where-with He loves Himself. There is the Holy Spirit. Through the Holy Spirit the love of God can enfold us and our world with no other than, but with the same love as God bears to Himself. Our lives can be rooted in no mere external relation to God, but in those internal relations in which His being consists. The love that binds man to God in the Holy Spirit is none other than the love which binds the Son to the Father in God's eternal being. This is the mystery of the love of God, the height and depth and length and breadth of it. This is man being "filled unto all the fulness of God."

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We are well aware that in speaking thus of the Divine Tri-unity we run the risk of being charged with presumption. But the charge falls to the ground. For the alternative is to treat God as an object which can be approached and apprehended by us after a rational and

scientific fashion, an object investigated and known by the powers and faculties of our human reason. It is that which is surely the great presumption. How can it be presumption to acknowledge that God can be thought of in no other way than as the Lord, to confess His sovereignty over all thought and reason? The doctrine of the Trinity marks the limits of our thought, as human and rational thought. It is a confession that reason has found its Lord. It is the reason's acknowledgment of the Sovereignty of God in His revelation. It is the confession of God's holiness and God's grace. It indicates our determination to proceed no further than God in His revelation, not to attempt to transcend this revelation by any human philosophy, because we know that revelation is the crisis of human philosophy as such. God gives Himself to be known as Father, Son and Spirit. Therefore as such do we confess Him, and give Him the glory.

APPENDIX I

Both the theological doctrine of the Trinity and the philosophical doctrine of the Absolute are concerned with the relation of eternity to time. They part company in that the theological doctrine contemplates an entry of eternity into time, whereas the philosophical contemplates a disappearance and dissolution of time in eternity. In the thought of theology there is a movement of eternity towards time which to the philosophical idea is a contradiction in terms. How can eternity move? Is not movement a temporal conception? The universal and absolute cannot be involved in temporal relations.

The philosophical idea resolves the antithesis between

time and eternity into a conception of the Absolute where the time element is eliminated. Time and eternity instead of being treated as dynamic concepts which would require the ideas of will and movement, are translated into rational concepts such as the relative and the Absolute, the imperfect and the perfect. Treated thus the antithesis vanishes for "you cannot have a perfection which is a perfection of nothing, nor a something conditioned within a perfect system which is perfect apart from the inclusive system that conditions it" (Bosanquet). So the perfect and the imperfect, the absolute and the relative "each has its being in and through the other." Thus time becomes appearance only, it inheres in the imperfect and the conditioned which, though necessary to the Absolute, disappear in it. To the realm of appearance is accordingly relegated the whole realm of the finite and temporal, together with all relation and all determination. Relation and determination are appearances of the Absolute, they have no place in the Absolute itself.

Revelation, however, treats time and eternity as dynamic conceptions, and finds their reconciliation not in any rational idea of the Absolute in which time, relation and determination are but appearances, but in that of predestination which implies them and gives them real meaning and substance. Predestination involves an entry of eternity into time relations, and therefore also the fact that relations and determinations belong to reality itself. The dialectic of predestination yields the Trinitarian idea. For those determinations which belong to predestination are, as such, immanent relations within reality itself. If predestination be the concept which unites the ideas of time and eternity it follows that the relations existing within reality can be carried over into time relations. *Finitum non capax infiniti*, but *infinitum*

capax finiti. The temporal being man, can be made the subject of a relation to the eternal being, God, which falls within and not without the relations existing in God Himself.

It will follow also that the predetermined will of God entering into time relations becomes an eschatological deed, a deed which is final, a deed which gathers up all temporal sequences and events in a crisis of eternal and absolute significance. This deed clearly cannot be as such an historical event, for it bursts through all historical events, but equally clearly it must take the form of an historical event ; for if historic events possess no relation to the great divine event, history is made empty of meaning. Such a deed implies an incarnation and the ground of the incarnation cannot be other than a relation existing immanently within the being of God. This relation cannot be identical with that in which man as a historic, temporal being finds himself planted within the relations existing in the Godhead. The relation between the Son and the Father in God cannot be the same as the relation in which man as a creaturely, temporal being is made participant in the divine life and being, otherwise there would be no need for the divine eschatological event, and the incarnate person.

This resolving of the antithesis between time and eternity in the dynamic idea of predestination rather than in the rational idea of the absolute involves therefore the Trinitarian conception, the conception of immanent determinations and immanent relationships within the being of God. It will be seen, then, how incompatible the Christian idea of God is with the philosophical Absolute. The one implies an absolute of relations, the other an absolute in which all relations disappear. It will also become evident how decisively revelation spells the

downfall of the autonomy of reason. The conception of the Absolute means the establishing of reason in a position of transcendence. From this position revelation dethrones it. It must consent to subject itself to the true transcendence given in revelation if it would carry on any worthy dialectic in regard to God and reality. It must recognise itself as an immanence and not a transcendence, as something that is, which is bound up with the general relations which belong to this present, here and now, temporal order. It must consent to be brought to a point of crisis in which it loses itself as reason to find itself as faith. It must recognise that it has to do with an order which itself must pass under the judgment and crisis of the real and the eternal. Not rationally can the Absolute be set forth, only dynamically, only in terms of will, judgment, crisis, deed.

APPENDIX II

The distinctions and differentiations of the Persons within the Divine Trinity raise the question of their unity. Dr. Wheeler Robinson criticises the idea of corporate personality as affording a concept by means of which this unity may be expressed, on the grounds that it is an abstraction. There is no such thing, he says, as a corporate mind or a corporate consciousness other than as the common consensus and mutuality of individual minds. The corporate mind is a metaphor, not a reality. This is doubtless true as applied to what we call mind or consciousness or spirit. But as Dean Inge has observed, ¹“there is a life below consciousness, and there may be a life above consciousness or what we mean by conscious-

¹ *Outspoken Essays*, p. 276.

ness.” And the figure of a corporate consciousness may have real value as an analogy (for of course it cannot be more) of the life of God. It has certain obvious advantages. It indicates how plurality can exist within unity. It possesses also a certain congruity with the idea of predestination where the one absolute will becomes the ground of the separate, individualised determinations and relations. In the corporate consciousness the individual will is determined by the corporate will. Each individual moves from his own centre and yet each individual centre is grounded in the common will. The idea of three centres of consciousness within the Trinity may not be so absurd as is often supposed. It is of course absurd if our experience of consciousness be the final one. But if we possess in faith, as has been elsewhere argued (*see* Ch. IV) a kind of supra-consciousness, that supra-consciousness which rises from consciousness standing in decision and crisis, the idea of three centres of consciousness in God, crude as it may seem, may be nearer the truth than any abstraction which would take reality and vitality out of the Trinitarian conception.

CHAPTER VIII

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE INCARNATION

THE question of Christian origins is one which has profoundly agitated the minds of men especially during the last hundred years.

For the most part that question has been treated mainly, if not solely, as an historical question, to be solved by the methods of historical science. And clearly, in so far as Christianity is an historical magnitude, one of the religions of the world, this method of handling the question is the right one. The origins of Christianity as an historical religion must be sought in many different directions. Jewish Rabbinism and Eschatology, Oriental Syncretism and the Mystery Religions, Hellenism, Gnosticism, Mandaeism—to all these must the historian give attention if he would describe the rise and development of the Christian religion. But if Christianity be not merely an historical religion, but divine revelation, and revelation in the meaning which has governed our thought throughout this discussion, revelation as bringing the whole mind and life of man under crisis, then we must roundly say that the source of Christianity is Christ and Christ alone. There must be a "mind of Christ" which supplies the content of Christianity as revelation, and all those interesting and intriguing considerations which gather round the phenomena which we have mentioned, and which are so clearly relevant to the rise and growth of Christianity as a religion, do not here come into view at all. Now there are many who would agree with the statement that the source of Christianity is Christ, to whom the question still remains in large part an historical one. For they mean by Christ, the Jesus of history, the object of

historical investigation. Truly they declare that historical learning and acumen are incapable in themselves of interpreting Jesus ; that what is needed is sympathetic intuition and spiritual discernment as well. Still, it is the human historical figure whose portrait may be drawn by spiritual devotion and historical learning working together, who is declared to be the origin of Christianity and the source of divine revelation. Jesus thus becomes the crown of history and humanity and in being such, the revelation of God.

We have already sufficiently indicated our dissent from this point of view and therefore can content ourselves here with only a few observations. In setting Christ thus definitely within the framework of history and humanity, revelation is made to stand continually at the mercy of historical criticism, for spiritual experience cannot as such guarantee historical fact. Moreover we never really get beyond humanity. The difference between Jesus and other men becomes at last, simply a difference in degree and not in kind. An attempt is made sometimes to get round this objection by saying that a difference in degree may be so great as to amount to a difference in kind, but this merely evades the point at issue. Differences in degree between men are one thing ; the difference between man on the one hand and God on the other is quite another. And it is in relation to that fundamental difference that Christ derives His whole significance in the New Testament witness. Further if Christ be thus included within history as the source of revelation, we are driven back at last to the religious consciousness of mankind in general. As the crown of history and humanity Christ belongs to the world on its religious and divine side. Thus " back to Christ " in the sense of back to the historical Jesus who lies open to historical and psycho-

logical and even spiritual investigation and interpretation, means back a long way farther still. It means back to the history and evolution of humanity on its spiritual side. Christ is eventually merged in religious history. He does not stand out from it, and stand related to it, after the manner of a final and all-commanding crisis. The whole outlook and orientation of New Testament thought is lost when we take as the origin of revelation, simply the historical beginning, namely the man Jesus as a man among men.

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When Paul speaks of having the "mind of Christ," he is referring to something in human consciousness which does not arise from historical or psychological causes. He does not mean the character or disposition of the historical Jesus. Nor does he mean the mind and outlook, which are the result of the impact of a dominating human personality, and which under the force of that impact begin to attribute to the personality a new dignity and a new significance. This kind of activity, the activity which raises to divine heights a personality which has deeply impressed itself on the consciousness, is all bound up with man's tendency towards myth-making. And one must have read the New Testament with poor eyes if one does not see that it is a polemic against myth-making in all its forms. Not indeed, that the writers of the New Testament could wholly escape this myth-making tendency. To confess that they did not completely escape it, is simply to confess that they were men. But all around them and in countless religious and philosophical or quasi-philosophical forms they saw this myth-making process going on, and they were thoroughly alive to the power and the danger of the myth-making

tendency. In so far as the *word*, the essential content of the gospel was concerned, they proclaimed unwearingly that it was the direct antithesis to such myth-making activity. It was, they said, with an emphasis and an earnestness which are in themselves impressive, of God and not of men. Nowhere in the whole history of religion can we discern such scorn for unreality, such suspicion of all that rises up simply out of the mind of man, as we have in the New Testament witness to revelation. To see that is an indispensable qualification for understanding that witness. So, in speaking of the mind of Christ, Paul is referring not to something which has arisen out of human consciousness but to something which has entered into it. He is speaking of something which is organically bound up with that divine and supernatural action of which the earthly life and career of Jesus were the historical expressions. The coming of Christ into the world involved the coming of that mind, that consciousness which recognised who He was, and interpreted Him as revelation. The relation of the mind that understands Christ as revelation, to Christ Himself as the subject of revelation, is not a natural, rational psychological relation, but a supernatural ; something which exists not in the mind of man and which can therefore be explained causally, but in the mind of God, and which is understandable in and through that mind alone. Thus the coming of Christ involves also the coming of the Spirit, in Whom He is seen and known as revelation. Both Christ and the Spirit come from the same source, and are mutually involved in the one great deed of revelation. In Christ occurs the eschatological deed of God, the deed of world-judgment and world-salvation. This deed must reach us as word, message, gospel, revelation. But we have ourselves no faculty for the understanding of such a

deed. A mere historical event with its moral and spiritual significance—that we can understand. But an eschatological deed, a deed of divine revelation, what power lies in us for apprehending that? The death of Christ as heroism, martyrdom, sacrifice—that we can comprehend. But the death of Christ as divine atonement for sin on a world-scale, how can we grasp this? Involved therefore in the deed is the presence and action of the Spirit in Whose light the meaning, the significance, the revelation of the deed appears. The Word must not only become flesh, it must become spirit, consciousness, understanding. The very mind and consciousness which perceives it for what it is, must be itself one of those determinations in the predetermined will of God of which the deed itself is another. And inasmuch as the predetermination of God is itself the nature of God, each of these determinations is shown to be a relation within God's own being, and the Son and the Spirit are seen to be explicitly and positively involved in the great deed of revelation.

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The origin of revelation is therefore the mind of Christ thus understood; His interpretation, His meaning given in and through the Spirit Who functions in the mind and consciousness of man. And concretely we may say it is the apostolic consciousness and interpretation of Him. For revelation there must be witness, and for witness there must be the Spirit. This consciousness and interpretation are in no wise to be explained, or rather explained away, as due to an amalgam of floating elements of Jewish Eschatology, Rabbinism, Orientalism, Hellenism and the like, catching hold so to speak of an impression and an impact received from a great dynamic human personality.

Many of these things have no doubt affected the form of the interpretation, but not its content. In its innermost essence the apostolic interpretation is an articulation of the mind of the risen and exalted Lord in the minds of men. It is a new understanding coming to express itself in a great word of Gospel, and increasingly unfolding itself in a wealth of insights and perceptions connected together by an inherent spiritual logic. Truth and understanding about God, man and the world and their mutual relations, grow out of this apostolic word. The more definitely these are worked out, the clearer does it become, that this word is no accidental thing, no fortuitous phenomenon of history. The word is creative in men's minds. It reaches out in such a way as to set the whole world and the whole of life in a new light. It creates a theology which under the influence of its immanent principle becomes ever richer, profounder, more vital. Something is here, which is not of man, nor of history, but of God.

There is no difficulty in believing that this consciousness and interpretation are given most explicitly and decisively in St. Paul. He quite definitely drew the distinction between the Christ after the flesh and the Christ after the Spirit, and close attention to his teaching reveals that distinction at every point. Everywhere is latent and presupposed in his thought the fact that the relation between Christ as fact of history and the understanding of Him as revelation, is not a natural, historical and psychological one, but a divine and supernatural. In fact this idea constitutes the immanent logic of his whole system; for he had a system though he was no systematizer, and the logic carries him forward often quite unconsciously. There is a 'mind' in him which permeates everything that proceeds out of his own mind,

an inspiration which is no mere feeling or emotion but which is the unfolding of a real dialectic of thought, operating, some might say subconsciously, but we should prefer to say supra-consciously. There is also continually expressed a passionate conviction that his commission and his message came directly from the heavenly Lord and were no mere matter of a received tradition; a conviction which in itself could hardly have much weight with us to-day were it not for the existence of this all-pervading dialectic of which we have spoken. But although we have this consciousness most directly in Paul we can discern it also in different degrees in all the other New Testament writers and original witnesses. The Johannine writings, for example, are full of it. In fact the aim of the fourth gospel is at bottom nothing other than to present a life of Christ from this point of view; to show, that is, not primarily how the Christ after the flesh lived and walked, but how the word that became flesh and whose glory those had seen, "who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God," was manifested. The world says the writer received not Christ, even His own received Him not, but those who were born of God received Him.

And the synoptic gospels themselves, which were once taken as primarily historical and biographical material, are now seen to be essentially evangelical material. Their interest is first and foremost to bear witness to the truth of the apostolic gospel, the apostolic interpretation of Christ, and to meet the situations both of life and thought which that gospel created in the Church. If it be said that nevertheless they betray strong traces of an historical personality which appears different from the figure depicted in the apostolic witness, that in a sense is only

what might be expected. The fact as it lies open to historical scrutiny does not bear in itself its own interpretation. There is a secret the understanding of which alone can reveal the meaning of the fact.

The Pauline orientation then, in which the whole New Testament orientation becomes most pronounced and most explicit is in its central significance the origin of Christianity, so that Paul could definitely say, "We have the mind of Christ." And if one asks why this should be so, if one finds here an arbitrariness which seems irrational, it is necessary again to recall the fact that the method of God in giving revelation is, according to the whole outlook of the Bible, that of choice and election and that the conceptions of election and the Holy Spirit stand or fall together.

Thus in all our attempts to explain the fact of Christ and to reach out after a Christology we do not begin with the historical Jesus, and proceed thence to the apostolic Christ, but contrariwise. We do not seek to show how the Jesus² discoverable by historical investigation, psychological insight and religious intuition developed, as it were, into the Christ of Paul and John. Rather do we take the latter for our starting-point and from thence seek to interpret the Jesus of history. And we maintain that if we are to speak of revelation, of a real incoming of God into the world, we must proceed after that fashion. Moreover we discover that only thus does the Jesus of history become really intelligible. But this is to anticipate.

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There is what looks like a formidable objection to this point of view which cannot simply be passed by. It is urged by many who concern themselves with the question

of Christian origins. And it is set out with great clearness and thoroughness in Kirsopp Lake's investigations into Christology, and very trenchantly in Spengler's brief but extraordinarily valuable delineation of Jesus in his *Decline of the West*. It is that the belief in the resurrection regarded simply as a belief and without any reference to its truth, was itself sufficient to account for the development or the transformation of the historical Jesus into the apostolic Christ. Neither Lake nor Spengler believes of course in the resurrection in any literal fashion, but Lake at any rate thinks that there were "appearances" which probably belong to a general category of psychic events.¹ Given these appearances, it is urged, or even a belief in them, what would be more natural than that all the features of the Messiah of Jewish and eschatological expectation and eventually also of the "kyrios" or "lord" of the Mystery Religions should be superimposed upon the Jesus of history? There is a natural, rational cause linking up the Jesus of history with the Christ of faith, and that cause is belief in an astonishing miracle. Whatever gave rise to this belief, its sheer existence in men's minds would be sufficient to account for the rise of apostolic Christology.

Spengler² sketches the situation as he conceives it, with a few vivid strokes. "Among Jesus's friends and disciples stunned as they were by the appalling outcome of the journey to Jerusalem, there appeared after a few days the news of his resurrection and reappearance. The impression of this news on such souls and in such a time can never be more than partially echoed in the sensibilities of a Late mankind. It meant the actual fulfilment of all

¹ See Chapter on Christology in *The Beginnings of Christianity*, by Foakes Jackson and Kirsopp Lake, Part I., and *The Resurrection of Jesus Christ*, by Kirsopp Lake.

² *The Decline of the West*, Vol. II, p. 218.

the Apocalyptic of that Magian Springtime—the end of the present æon marked by the ascension of the redeemed Redeemer, the second Adam, the Saoshyant, Enosh, Barnasha, or whatever other name attached to ‘Him,’ into the light-realm of the Father. And therewith the foretold future, the new world-æon, ‘the Kingdom of heaven,’ became immediately present. They felt themselves at the decisive point in the history of redemption. This certainty completely transformed the world-outlook of the little circles. His ‘teachings,’ as they had flowed from his mild and noble nature—his inner feeling of the relation between God and man and of the high meaning of the times, and were exhaustively comprised in and defined by the word ‘love’—fell into the background, and their place was taken by the *teaching of him*. As the Arisen he became for his disciples a new figure, in and of the Apocalyptic, and (what was more) its most important and final figure.” There is no need then to bring in the supernatural in order to account for the transformation (or whatever word one may choose wherewith to describe the process) of the historical Jesus into the apostolic Christ. The mere resurrection belief, coming, whence it is bootless to enquire, and explicable, it matters not how, is sufficient.

Is there any answer to this? In a sense, we may say there is not. There is no answer, no sufficient answer at least, which rises from the same plane of thought, even one might say, from the same order of consciousness as that from which the contention proceeds. It is futile, for example, to say, ‘yes, the belief indeed created the transformation, but the belief was true and our task is now to demonstrate its truth.’ This method of answering history with history leads to an endless and a fruitless polemic in which the belief itself dies of sheer exhaustion.

The confession of Christ's resurrection must be—a confession. It cannot be the conclusion of an argument or the result of an investigation. The truth of it must create the belief in it. It must be a word which we hear and to which we respond, not something which we can approach from the outside and make up our minds upon. Since the resurrection is not historical (though in history) but super-historical, it is a divine movement; a movement therefore which must reach us, bringing new eyes and ears and understanding. But if there is no sufficient answer on the historical plane to the contention, we may say there is not sufficient weight for it on that plane. The kind of consciousness which is compounded of belief in physical miracle and the reaction to dominant human personality, we can, in part at any rate, discover from history; and at bottom it is quite different, not indeed from everything which we can find in Paul or John, but from *the* thing which is there. This is the Holy Spirit as new mind, new consciousness and new understanding which, as we have seen, has the power to thrust itself into all the departments of human thought and human life in a fundamentally critical and a fundamentally creative way. Much more feasible would it be to explain the resurrection appearances as themselves conditioned by the emergence of this new consciousness. But in that case they would correspond to something real; that is to say they would be real perceptions of the Risen Christ however psychologically mediated. We take a step beyond Spengler. He says that all consciousness is historically conditioned. Whatever be its forms or aspects, whether it be religious, political, scientific, artistic, it is an historical formation and phenomenon. We say no; at the long last man's consciousness is super-historically conditioned, it is conditioned by its relation to God and His

eternal will. For that reason its deepest nature is that of a sin-consciousness, and a death-consciousness which is what it is, because of the underlying sin-consciousness. And where we have this sin-consciousness brought to the most decisive and far-reaching expression as in the word of the gospel, there we have the Eternal Righteousness and the Eternal Life decisively present and at work ; there we have the resurrection.

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Now all this has a direct bearing upon the problem of Christology proper. The question is sometimes asked : are we to explain Christ by means of some general philosophy of the universe lying to our hand ? Or, on the other hand are we to begin with the recorded facts and sayings of the historical Jesus together with the impressions which He made on men's minds and hearts, so far as all this can be ascertained by historical research and sympathetic insight, and work these up into a philosophy of value judgments in which Christ will have the value of God for men ? The answer is, at bottom, by neither of these ways. By the first way not, for what philosophy have we which can deal with revelation ? Philosophy has a certain competence in regard to the universe and man's life. But what competence does it possess for the new from above ? It can reckon with the movement of the universe, but how can it reckon with a movement *to* the universe ? Revelation, *Urgeschichte*, falls outside of its categories. And not by the second way ; for once again we have no faculty which can get us beyond fact to revelation, beyond history to *Urgeschichte*. We begin then, neither with a philosophy, nor with a fact made the basis of a value judgment ; we begin with a fact *in* an interpretation given in the apostolic witness. We begin

with a fact which has become a *word*. Our starting-point is that there is a fact, the fact of Christ, which is a word of God to man, *the* word of God. To a world in discontinuity with, alienation from, God, a world in its creatureliness and a world in its sin and fall, has come the word of reconciliation and redemption. This word is no mere message sent through a prophet, but a final and decisive deed of God appearing at a certain point in human history. Yet this deed remains, in its relation to us, word. That is to say it is not something which we can directly lay hold of and possess in our experience ; it is something which calls for attention, decision, faith. To put it bluntly God did not directly redeem the world, He promised it redemption in Christ. God was acting in Christ in such a way that His action directly promised the world's redemption. The word ' directly ' is of importance here. A mere message sent through a prophet would be an indirect promise. It would not be God's own word, God Himself speaking. All mere words, statements, messages are *just* words, things that men say. They are not and cannot be of themselves effective promises. If I tell a man that I will be with him to-morrow, that no doubt is a promise, but not an effective promise. Whereas if I jump on a train which leads me to his destination, that is an effective promise that presently I shall be with him. My jumping on the train does not mean that now I am with him, but it is an action carrying an effective promise. So God's word is God's action which carries in itself the promise that that action will be available. Thus we say that God was present and active in Christ in such a way as to promise the world's redemption. God linked Himself on to our humanity in Christ in a way that promised the re-establishment of those true and original relationships between humanity and Himself which

belong to the divine purpose in creation. The world is not actually redeemed and made new. Life and history go on under the old conditions. But there is a great difference notwithstanding. God has entered humanity in Christ in such a way that humanity now stands under effective promise.

The kind of Christology which this implies can be indicated in a rudimentary fashion in a few words. In Christ there was a real union of humanity and divinity. But this union does not mean that the humanity and divinity existed, so to speak, side by side within the one person, according to the Chalcedonian definition and the Tome of Leo ; so that now Christ acts in one nature, now in the other. Nor does it mean that there was a *communicatio idiomatum*, so that each nature communicated its own properties to the other, as Luther thought. Nor yet that the logos or divine word took the place of some factor normally belonging to the human nature, the spirit or *nous* as Apollinarius taught. Nor again that out of the union of the two natures, a new nature emerged as Eutyches and the Monophysites held. Still less does it mean that Christ was simply a man uniquely tenanted by the Holy Spirit as modern liberalism tends to suppose, for this would leave His person human and not divine, and would make Him differ from us in degree only and not in kind. Moreover the union of the two natures was not that between some abstract perfect humanity and divinity as those imagine who speak of being incorporated into the perfect humanity of Christ by means of the sacraments. It was the union between our actual here and now humanity and divinity, the taking up of our creaturely and sinful humanity into God. It was the word being made *flesh* : even more, the word being made *sin*—"him who knew no sin he made to be sin

on our behalf" (2 Cor. v, 21 R.V.). It was the laying hold of our flesh, the flesh of sin.

Now this view involves the position that we have to consider the relation between the humanity and the divinity of Christ as from our point of view not a continuity but a discontinuity. The humanity of Christ being our humanity must be regarded as something which the divinity disqualifies and negates as such. That is to say, it is something which has not to be expressed, but to be surrendered, given up to God; and in that surrendering and giving up it finds its true fulfilment. Hence Christ presses towards the Cross. And His whole historical life becomes a kenosis, a self-emptying, a yielding of itself up. But this is only one side of the picture. This kenosis is really a great divine plerosis. It is the humanity's real fulfilment. It must be emphasized that the kenosis is no mere human act of renunciation, and no act of *mere* renunciation. What meaning, what promise would there be in that? It is the human side of the activity of the divinity which was in Him. Divinity meets humanity in crisis and new creation. Human independence, human autonomy, the human standing in itself and living from itself outward, the human expressing itself (and that is what our humanity is in its fall and separation from God, in its detachment from the true ground of its life) has to be abandoned, has to be completely negated if the true humanity is to appear. The kenosis therefore implies the plerosis, the Cross implies the Resurrection. What from our side is a death-ward movement is from the side of God a life-ward movement. The gospel story is therefore dominated by the Cross and the Resurrection. It breathes the Resurrection as Bengel said. In and through the self-emptying of the actual empirical humanity, the true humanity which is after the

original creation of God finds continual expression until it rises up revealed and complete in the resurrection. The works of God are manifested in Jesus all along the line of His life because the works of man as such are renounced. Therefore on the part of the earthly historical Jesus we have on the one hand, a continual dependence upon and subordination to God, a striving and struggling and waiting upon His will, a looking from Himself outward to the leading of God, a perpetual activity of prayer, a declaration that God alone is good and that He Himself must not be called good ; and on the other hand we have an abiding sense of possessing divine authority, the feeling of a unique relation to God, the consciousness that God's kingdom is present in Him and that He exercises the powers of that kingdom. These two attitudes are not contradictory, they are the inevitable expressions of a divine-human life, the inevitable results of that death-ward movement in Him which in virtue of being such is in its deepest reality a life-ward movement. So we say that Christ was wholly human and wholly divine. Not wholly divine because wholly human, as if the full expression of humanity is divinity ; and not wholly divine in addition to being wholly human, as if a perfect humanity and a perfect divinity stood in him side by side with one another : but wholly divine because in Him occurred a deed of God in which the human nature which the divinity had assumed was wholly turned round, negated in its empirical actuality and restored to its divine definition.

At this point two considerations arise of great importance. First, it follows that the person of Christ, the innermost secret and reality of His being, was divine and not human. If the renunciation of His humanity was not at centre the act of a man but the deed of God,

then Christ possessed no human person but a divine. This divine person in no way took the place of anything that is integral to a human self or personality. It had to do not with the factors which make up an individuality but with what that individuality ultimately is. All that belongs to human personality belonged to Christ, even what we call the ego. But whereas the human ego in us, though having its ground ultimately in God has become detached from that ground and has assumed a condition of independence and autonomy, the ego of Christ arose in and was determined by a renunciation of that independence and autonomy. We have then in the Incarnation a pure and absolute miracle, but no psychological monstrosity. On the plane of history and from the point of view of the historian Jesus remains simply a man. The early preachers in the Acts of the Apostles could still speak of Him with perfect propriety as a man: "Jesus of Nazareth a man approved of God unto you" (Acts ii, 22, R.V.). There was nothing "in" Him, nothing isolable from the rest of Him, that could be called non-human. Nevertheless that which determined His humanity and was the essential secret of His being was divine and not human.

And the second point that arises at this stage is contained in the question: are we to consider the renunciation of His human autonomy as a great act of moral conquest, a triumph of the human will? If the answer be in the affirmative it would seem that we have in Him simply a man who won a great moral victory, a man who re-attached himself to the true ground of his being by means of moral conquest, but not a real incarnation of God. If the answer be in the negative it would appear as if His obvious moral struggles were somehow artificial and unreal, as if He were miraculously

preserved from sinning and his human and historical sentence a mere piece of divine play-acting.

But the question is not so simple as this sharp alternative would suggest. We have first of all to be on our guard against a kind of deification of morality. It is difficult to state the matter in a way which will not give rise to misunderstanding. Nevertheless it must be said that what we call moral struggle is in itself but a parable, an earthly human analogue of the divine will and working. Constantly do we fall into the tendency of identifying these two things. This is plain, unabashed work-righteousness and it is irreconcilable with the doctrine of justification by faith alone. Thus we tend to suppose that Jesus attests His divinity in that He overcame sin by pure activity of moral will and personality. But directly we rise to the New Testament idea that moral will though a human analogue of the divine will is not identical with that will, we perceive that there is no contradiction in the two statements that the renunciation of Jesus to the will of God was both a divine act and from our point of view a human victory. Since this renunciation was fundamentally a deed of God it was no human act. Since it was a deed of God in man, it possessed all the recognisable features of moral struggle and achievement. The renunciation of Jesus was the earthly human result and sequela of a divine self-renunciation. It arose because of a divine movement of love towards men. It was the earthly human expression of God's own sacrificial love come into the world. God Himself in the Person of His Son comes and stands within the limitations of our humanity. The movement of love from God to man in the Incarnation creates a movement of love from man to God. The renunciation of God in eternity has, as its human counterpart, a human life of effort and conquest.

This effort can only be called unreal if the deed of God be called unreal. Certainly there was involved the *non potuit peccare* (he was not able to sin) on the part of Christ. Sin in its true meaning was the very thing impossible to Him. How possibly could a great God-manward movement become a falling away of man from God? How could the divine subject of the human personality become sinful subject? The *non potuit peccare* belongs to the very definition of the Incarnate Word. The putting in its place of the *potuit non peccare* (he was able not to sin) is a piece of sheer humanism and moralism, not to say presumption. But the moral struggle of Jesus is not made thereby unreal. We may remind ourselves that very often the temptations which give us the most trouble and occasion us the bitterest struggles, are those to which our nature will not let us succumb. We could do these evil things, but then we simply could not. We are here terribly temptable but we cannot fall. And the achievements which cost us the most are not seldom the very ones which we are bound to realise. We cannot leave a certain task alone, maybe we wish we could, but we simply cannot. There are many experiences known to us in which constraint and freedom are one. And the intensity of Christ's struggles, the bitterness of the cup which He had to drink, what is all this but an indication of the passion of love which lies behind God's deed of renunciation and sacrifice? What is it but the earthly human counterpart of the sacrifice in the heavenly places? What *we* call struggle, what *we* call pain, certainly does not exist in the being of God. The Church was guided aright in rejecting Patripassianism (the idea that the Father suffered) and also in insisting that Christ suffered in His humanity, not in His divinity. But the suffering and striving of the human Jesus is nevertheless an index of

what it cost God to redeem the world. It is the human parallel to a great divine sacrifice. It is the creation of a great, divine deed of love which drew mightily upon God's will and heart. Even in our experience we find often that the actual sufferers are not the most real sufferers. A father who surrenders a son for some great cause, let us say to fight for his country, does not suffer in the sense that the son suffers. Indeed he may take joy in his son's sacrifice and struggle. Nevertheless, there is something in the father's experience which though not identical with what the son experiences as suffering, is often deeper and more agonising. Even in the midst of his joy, and even as a constituent of his joy, there is a pain of a totally different nature and kind, but even more taxing and more terrible. The father is involved in his son's suffering, sometimes more deeply involved, though in a different way, than the son himself. And though in the strict sense we must say that Christ suffered in His humanity and not in His divinity, it has always been Christian teaching that the whole Trinity was involved in our redemption. And though we may not speak of God being tempted, we must regard the human temptations of Jesus as the earthly parallel to a divine contending with the antagonisms that stood in the way of His redeeming purpose. Thus the *non potuit peccare* simply means that it was Divine 'struggle' (we are bound to use the word as we have no other) which stood behind the moral struggles of Jesus. Of course if we are in search of a mere human example of moral heroism and victory, we may regard Jesus as winning through in virtue of the resources of His own will. But moral examples and illustrations of moral victory cannot save. They may be helpful often, but they yield no gospel.

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There are many criticisms which the conception of Christology which we have briefly indicated has to encounter. Of these we may select three, as covering the main ground of objection. The first is that it is much too abstract to be convincing; much too abstract also to be illumining and helpful. One feels the force of this objection, and in a sense one has to yield to it. Our attempt is to put into more or less rational terms, something whose content transcends all rationality. How can an act of God be described in the form of our human speech? How can we draw a diagram of a movement from above? The movement cannot really be described, it can only be divined, recognised, met. That man knows the secret of Christ to whom the very sense of sin speaks of the divine forgiveness, to whom the very sense of death betokens the reality of the resurrection. In the movement of the Spirit, not in the movement of rational thought, he perceives the Word made flesh, made sin, made death. Abstraction belongs not to the thing in itself but to all our attempts to put it into the frame-work of rational speech. There is, however, a kind of speech which serves its purpose better. It is that kind of speech which we call preaching, where the preacher strives to not to describe in a theoretical way, but to make his speech sacramental of the great divine event. This kind of speech draws not only on the theoretical faculty, but on all the powers and faculties of personality. But even preaching cannot of itself convey the secret. Only as the word of the preacher becomes imbued with the power and illumination of the Divine Spirit Himself, does the light spread, the understanding awaken and the conviction come. In a sense true Christology is, from the theoretical point of view, only a form of polemic. It contends against false and inadequate

views of the Person of Christ. It can say what will not do by way of interpretation, it cannot say satisfactorily what will. It has often been pointed out that the Chalcedonian definition is in the nature of a reaction against and a disallowing of Christological heresies, while it leaves the problem itself essentially unsolved.

If then we are told that our view is abstract and remote we must confess that we have no reply immediately to hand. And yet to this criticism we cannot yield. Partly it is based upon a misunderstanding. It is said that the idea of a divine person assuming an impersonal human nature is unreal, that Jesus was a human and historical personality whose power can be felt to-day, and that no Christology can be anything but speculative abstraction which does not stand firm and square on the historic personality, and derive its essential content therefrom. This objection, however, has real weight only against those forms of the two-nature Christology which virtually deny the human personality of Jesus. Where Jesus is regarded as acting now in His human nature, and now in His divine, it becomes impossible to assign to Him real human personality. He becomes a psychological anomaly, not to say monstrosity; a sheer mystery and not a revelation. An impersonal humanity does not mean a humanity deprived of human personality. It means a human nature in which the divine ground of all that arises as personality in us has become the directly-working inward principle. The Divine Son of God in Whom we become sons of God through the Holy Spirit, is through that same Spirit brought within the sphere of our human nature. The result of that cannot be other than a man with all the features and characteristics of human personality. We cannot divide up the historically given magnitude of the personality of Jesus, and say this

in it was human and this divine. We enquire rather after that ground in which all human personality arises. And we contend that this divine ground was the Person of Jesus. To assert therefore that revelation consists not in the human personality of Jesus as such, but in the divine ground in which all personality arises and which in Him was directly operative, is in no way to deny, but emphatically to affirm, the human personality.

But not only is this criticism based on a misunderstanding, it is based also on what we cannot but feel to be a serious perversion of outlook. It belongs to that movement and tendency in modern thought to claim an absolute and final value for human personality. Human personality is declared to possess such high value that God can be 'expressed' in it. Now this is surely a kind of hypostatization of human personality, and here we need to pause. The danger is great of a subtle kind of anthropomorphism; and even worse, of a, doubtlessly for the most part unrecognised, denial of the Sovereignty of God. It is high time that a serious caveat were uttered against this modern idolatry of personality. Human personality, it must be roundly asserted, is a created thing. In no sense is it a part of deity. "Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of?" (Isaiah ii, 22); "Let no man glory in men" (1 Cor. iii, 21); "He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord" (1 Cor. i, 31). This is beyond any dispute the emphasis of the Bible. To proclaim the divinity and finality of human personality, to draw anything in the nature of an identity between human personality and final reality is to depart from the whole outlook and testimony of Scripture. Personality points to God, is a human and earthly parable of the divine, no more. Human personality is, like nature, the material on which

the creative power of God works, it is not the sphere in which the Deity actually expresses His life. Between human personality and Divine Person there is a continuity certainly, but the continuity lies in God ; it is a continuity of crisis, and creativeness, it is the Holy Spirit. We may also note, by the way, that the absolute and final value of human personality involves the position that immortality inheres in its structure, that it possesses survival value. But this is a thought which is wholly foreign to the Bible. There the emphasis is not on immortality but on resurrection, a new creative act of God. It is not said that the human spirit lives on, in virtue of its own spiritual nature ; but that man who is a body-soul being, in sinking down into death is met by the power of God, Who raises him up again into a new kind or order of existence. It is God alone "who hath immortality," and man receives it as His gift, a gift that flows from His creative or rather new-creative power and will.

Moreover the idolaters of personality never seem to see how radically human personality is affected by sin and guilt. For the most part they treat sin as an incident and an episode in man's life, and not as radically affecting the whole relationship of God to man, and accordingly determining the nature of human personality. They do not see *quanti ponderis peccatum sit*. The expression of human personality is by no means the manifestation of God, otherwise the doctrine of justification by faith alone must be totally abandoned. And it is not without meaning to point to the fact, that the modern idolatry of personality is contemporary with a strange absence of real and effective personality. We talk much to-day about personality, and we give much attention to cultivating it ; but very little of it is apparent in our midst. The fact is, personality arises most effectively just where

men lose sight of it in looking above and beyond it. And the theologies which even disallow and disqualify it as such, are precisely those which have been most instrumental in creating it in its most real and effective forms. ¹Says Doumergue, with reference to the theology of Calvin : " it is the theologies of the bound will which have saved liberty ; it is the theologies of salvation by another than man, which have saved human morality ; it is the theologies of renouncing the world which have saved the mastery of men, over the world ; it is the theologies of self-abnegation which have saved human personality ; it is the theologies which have preached love for God alone which have saved love for all men ; it is the theologies of eternal predestination which have saved progress, even political and social ; it is the theologies of heteronomy which have conferred on man an autonomy so masterful in itself that it has subjugated everything ; it is the theologies which have said, ' God is all, man is nothing,' which have made of man a force, an energy, a power, incomparable, divine."

But turning now from the criticism of abstraction we must give attention to another objection which is often brought against our point of view. It is that we do not get in this way a real Incarnation. The doctrine of the Incarnation, it is said, means the union of divinity with a perfect humanity, whereas our view, involving as it does the negating of the actual, empirical humanity of Jesus makes a real incarnation of the Godhead in human nature and human life impossible. But now, what is this perfect humanity but an abstraction ? It is no existence, but simply an idea, or if one prefers to call it so, an ideal ? If in Christ, God united Himself with a perfect humanity (in the sense which the criticism under consideration

¹ Doumergue's *Calvin*, Tome IV, *La Pensée de Calvin*, Book I, Chapter 1.

means) He united Himself with something which simply is not here in this world at all, something which has never existed and will never exist. On the contrary we say it is *our* humanity with which God united Himself in Christ, our creaturely, sin-stained, death-ruled humanity. It is *our* house in which the Eternal Righteousness and the Eternal Love abode. It is our human nature, not some ideal or abstract human nature which does not belong to the realm of existence at all, which God took to Himself in Jesus Christ. How otherwise is the Incarnation real? How otherwise can it be anything but an abstraction? Thus was Christ the friend of publicans and sinners. Thus did He bear *our* sins, and carry *our* sorrows. Thus did He stand under the judgment of God for us, a judgment which is over all flesh. Thus was the Word made flesh. Thus was He Who knew no sin, made to be sin on our behalf. It was in laying hold of *our* humanity, and not expressing it, but surrendering it to the critical and new-creative power of God, that the Eternal God became man in Christ. This is the miracle that moves our wonder and our praise. And it is just here that we perceive how that the Cross of Christ supplies the clue to the understanding of the Incarnation. What has brought orthodox Christology, which still in its deepest meaning holds the promise of the future, into a condition of stale-mate, is that men have so much concerned themselves with the task of uniting together abstract natures, instead of focussing their attention on the great divine events of death and resurrection.

We can only understand who Christ was by coming to realise what Christ did. He died unto sin. He bore the sin of the world. He presented our nature before God for judgment and new creation. He entered into *our* death, and in the resurrection from the dead, He becomes

“the firstborn among many brethren.” And the believer dies with Him and rises with Him, not figuratively, imaginatively, ideally, mystically, but here and now in faith, and at the last, in the moment of death, in utmost realism. The purpose of the Incarnation was the atonement, the reconciliation, the redemption, the new creation of our humanity, and that purpose determines its nature. The Incarnation does not simply mean the mere presence of God in human nature, the uniting together of two entities to form a kind of spectacle. It means His presence as will, action, judgment, grace, new creation. Just as we must interpret the Eternal nature of God from His predetermined will, so we must interpret the nature of the Incarnate from the standpoint of redemptive deed and action. God was not simply present in humanity in the Person of Christ, He was there doing something with it, turning it round, reconciling it to Himself, making it new. It is not as if God first prepared for Himself a perfect humanity with which next He united Himself. How could He prepare a perfect humanity excepting through the judgment and recreation of *our* humanity? And if He could, what would that have to do with us? What message, word, hope, promise would that hold for us? It is just because *our* humanity is laid hold of in Christ, that the Incarnation is so real. And if one objects that this view attributes actual sin to the humanity of Jesus, we reply that it means nothing of the kind. For it must be repeated again, Jesus did not express His humanity, He renounced it as such, He delivered it up to God, and that renunciation, that delivering of it up, was the movement, the ‘motif’ of His life as the Incarnate. The Cross lay at the very heart of His personality. Of course if we have in view merely a human act of renunciation, we could not proclaim the sinlessness of Jesus.

But inasmuch as this is just what we have *not* in view, but a real movement from God conditioning the renunciation, a real plerosis that creates the kenosis, all sin as belonging to the Incarnate is excluded. A real Incarnation therefore implies a laying hold of *our* humanity, and not some abstract or ideal humanity. "It behoved him in all things to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted" (Hebrews ii, 17-18, R.V.).

But we must now turn to yet another criticism. It is said that our point of view leads to a disparaging of the historical Jesus; that thereby the life, teaching, example, deeds of Jesus are emptied of all real significance for revelation. Our contention, however, is by no means that there is no revelation in the historical facts of Christ's life. On the contrary they are full of revelation. It is that these facts do not shine in their own light. That is to say, we have to look above them and beyond them if we are to discover their true significance. Just as the meaning of history in general is not gained by an induction from its course, but must be seen in the light of revelation (*Urgeschichte*) so the meaning of this history does not lie on the historical plane, but must be seen from above that plane. We may note, that it is very widely felt that there was a secret about this man. And the extraordinarily divergent verdicts that have been passed upon Him from the standpoint of historical investigation confirm that feeling. Some indeed have felt the problem of the historical Jesus to be so acute that they have roundly declared that there was no such person, but that His story is a piece of mythology. It is only necessary to

refer to Schweitzer's great book, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus* in confirmation of the statement that to the historian Jesus presents an insoluble problem. Schweitzer himself is content to leave Him so. He says: ¹"He comes to us as One unknown, without a name, as of old by the lake-side He came to those men who knew Him not." He even goes so far as to suggest that we must abandon all attempts after a Christology. ²"Before that mysterious Person, who in the form of his time, knew that he was creating upon the foundation of his life and death a moral world which bears his name, we must be forced to lay our faces in the dust, without daring even to wish to understand his nature." If Christ is to be interpreted it cannot be from the mere record of Him, it must be from the witness of Him. But when we stand at the point of view of the witness, when we stand above the facts as such in the region of the interpretation, and when through the Holy Spirit the interpretation becomes real light and understanding, then the facts of the historical life become full of revelatory meaning and significance. We may remark, by the way, that it was historic 'flair' of the highest kind which led Schweitzer to approach the life of Jesus from the point of view of the Passion, and to read the facts and the sayings of that life from this point of view. In that way he was able to reach conclusions which bear a close affinity with the interpretations of faith. To interpret Christ's life by His death brings the historian as near as he can get to the standpoint of the believer. At the Passion the air of history is most heavily charged with that of *Urgeschichte*. It seems strange that Schweitzer who as historian came so near to the interpretations of the witness, should as theologian step back from them and

¹ *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, p. 401.

² *The Mystery of the Kingdom of God*, pp. 274-275.

rationalise the significance of Christ's life in terms of immanence.

We do not then 'disparage' the historical Jesus, or empty Him of meaning and revelation. Anything but that. The self-emptying, the kenosis of the earthly Jesus which finds its consummation in the Cross, is accompanied every step of the way by a plerosis which finds its consummation in the Resurrection. These two movements of kenosis and plerosis are one movement seen from two sides, the human side and the divine. The going out of the human merely as such, means the incoming of the divine. These two movements are mutually involved at every point of the Lord's life. It is in them that His being is constituted. Thus in all His words and deeds the power of the resurrection, of the new divine humanity, makes itself felt. Always was Jesus doing the works of God, for at the centre of His being, the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of the Cross and Resurrection, the Spirit in Whom the divinity and the humanity act in one another and through one another, was at work in all the absoluteness and finality of His power. The Fourth Gospel well brings out this involution of the kenosis and the plerosis in the life of Jesus. "I can of myself do nothing : as I hear, I judge : and my judgement is righteous ; because I seek not my own will, but the will of him that sent me " (John v, 30). " He that speaketh from himself, seeketh his own glory : but he that seeketh the glory of him that sent him, the same is true, and no righteousness is in him " (John vii, 18). " I am not come of myself " (John vii, 28). " If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing " (John viii, 54). " As the Father hath life in himself even so gave he to the Son also to have life in himself " (John v, 26, R.V.). The accusation of disparaging the historical Jesus rests upon the misapprehension that, according to the view which we

hold, nothing was happening in His life save the renunciation and the disqualifying of His humanity. It is lost sight of that that negative movement as we may call it, is the obverse of a great positive movement, that the kenosis is in its fundamental reality a divine plerosis. Mere renunciation possesses no value. It is only when the human as such is disqualified by the incoming of the divine, and when therefore the human is restored to its divine meaning, that revelation arises. Could these two movements of kenosis and plerosis be dissociated from one another in the life of Jesus, could the latter be thought of merely as coming *after* the former, there would indeed be much point in speaking of a disparagement of the historical Jesus. But inasmuch as these two movements are mutually involved, inasmuch as they take their character the one from the other, inasmuch as they are essentially one movement as seen from two sides, the charge of disparagement falls to the ground. It is not the historical Jesus who is disparaged. It is history, in its claim to reveal the essential content of His person and work. A life of Jesus in the biographical sense is an impossibility. But a preaching of the gospel on the basis of the historic records of His life and words and deeds, clothes these records with light and life and power.

And we may note, that since the Holy Spirit was working in the life of Jesus, the Spirit of the Cross and Resurrection, the Spirit of crisis and new creation, the Spirit of the self-fulfilment of the divine through the self-surrender of the human, the Spirit in Whom the humanity and the divinity act in and through each other, it came about that the historic Jesus was ever producing the condition of crisis among the men brought into contact with Him. To the Pharisees and religious leaders He is an offence, a stumbling-block. The

disciples on the other hand forsake all and follow Him. Zacchæus, the publican, turns right round as Christ comes to him, while Nicodemus, the ruler of the Jews, recognising no need for a thorough cleavage and new departure in his life, remains on the outside. Can anyone read the record of the Lord's deeds and words without coming up against a great either-or? "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth" (Matthew xii, 30). "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whosoever would save his life shall lose it: and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake shall find it" (Matthew xvi, 24-25, R.V.). No historical reason is adequate to explain this either-or. But when we rise above the historical plane into the region of *Urgeschichte*, when Christ stands forth in the light of the Holy Spirit as divine revelation, then this crisis, this great either-or is seen in its true meaning and significance. The historical Jesus can only be theologically explained (in so far as we can talk about explanation at all) never historically or psychologically. But when we stand at the right theological point of view the story, as it were, opens out before us, and many of the antinomies and discrepancies even, which present such problems to the historical critic, begin to be resolved. And specially this antinomy: how could the Jesus of the synoptic tradition have developed into the Pauline and Johannine Christ, and the Christ of the Christian Church!

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The final question which calls for treatment in this chapter, has to do with the relation of the conception of Christology which we have indicated to the traditional Christology of the Catholic Church. We have already

indicated both its affinities with and its divergencies from what is known as Chalcedonianism. It agrees with Chalcedonianism in affirming the two natures, the human and the divine within the one Person. To abandon the two-nature Christology is to erase the deep distinction between man and God, to make God continuous with man and nature, and to take all vital significance out of such words as fall, redemption, resurrection and new creation.¹ "The opposition against the doctrine of the natures, against the 'metaphysic' of the Church's Christology, conceals the much more fundamental opposition against the Biblical Christian understanding of revelation in general. The fundamental contrast of the Christian faith: creature-creator, sinful creatureliness—the divine world of redemption, this world—the world to come, whose bridging over is the concern of the Biblical Christian witness of faith, is confounded with a relative opposition, that of nature and moral law, of being and value." The great strength of Chalcedonianism is that it disallows any kind of fusion between the divine and the human. It establishes that God is not man, and man is not God. We are convinced that all real Christological advance must take its bearings from the Chalcedonian formula. There are, however, certain outstanding defects. We do not number among the most serious of these that the problem of Christ's Person is merely stated and not solved. It may be that little more can be done than to state the problem correctly. But it is in the very stating of the problem that Chalcedonianism falls short. We do not learn from the Chalcedonian formula that God becomes incarnate in Christ as His *Word*. That is to say, the Incarnation is not set forth in such a way as to make it a message, a call, a judgment, a

¹ Brunner, *Der Mittler*, p. 207.

crisis and a new creation. We have two abstract natures held miraculously together, but the divine nature has no action of a critical nature upon the human. The result of the uniting of the two natures is a spectacle rather than a word to men. Nothing is really said *to* us. It is here that the criticism of Chalcedonianism as metaphysical finds its account. The human is not made to speak of the divine, and the divine is not made to speak *to* the human. Hence the Chalcedonian formula fails to set forth the Incarnation as revelation. There is nothing in it which calls forth a response from men. The Incarnation becomes something which has to be assented to, not responded to.

It is putting the same criticism in another way when we say that the doctrine of the Incarnation is not stated in such a way as to imply the Atonement. The two natures are static entities and their union is a static thing. The dynamic idea is wanting. From the point of view of the formula the Atonement is otiose. What need of a great deed of atonement, when the human and the divine can be brought together without creating crisis, deed, judgment? All that is logically necessary is for the believer to be somehow integrated into this unity of the human and the divine. A quasi-physical incorporation into the sacred humanity becomes the necessary thing. The word becomes flesh but there is no sense in which the word becomes 'sin.' It is true that the letter of Leo to Flavian which was approved by the Council of Chalcedon contains the words: ¹"Thus the properties of each nature and essence were preserved entire and went together to form one person; and so humility was taken up by majesty, weakness by strength, mortality by eternity; and for the purpose of paying the debt which we had incurred, that nature that is inviolable was united to the nature that

¹ See Bethune Baker's *Introduction to the History of Christian Doctrine*, p. 289.

can suffer, in order that the conditions of our restoration might be satisfied, and the one and the same Mediator between God and men, the man Jesus Christ, might be able to die in respect of the one and not able to die in respect of the other." But according to this statement, the deed of redemption stands in no organic relation to the uniting of the natures. The uniting takes place *in order that* the deed may be performed, but the nature of the deed does not supply the terms by means of which the uniting of the natures may be understood. The doing of the great deed does not flow directly from the uniting of the natures. What is needed in the interests of the credibility of the creed of Chalcedon is a firmer emphasis on the fact that it was no abstract perfect humanity which was united with the divine in Christ, but our human nature in its actual condition of fall and sin, a humanity therefore, which as such the divinity disqualifies. The natures need to be defined less as static and rational entities than as movements, in which the human nature is related to the divine not positively but negatively. It is in the surrender of the human to the divine that the human nature becomes a perfect human nature. The incoming of divinity means the outgoing of humanity in its empiric actuality : yet not its annulment but its new creation. What Chalcedonianism lacks is any real understanding of the Holy Spirit as the relation between the humanity and the divinity of Christ ; the Holy Spirit through Whom two different movements, that of humanity and of divinity are brought together and made to operate in and through each other, so that what from our side, the human side, is a movement towards death, is from the other side, the divine side, a movement of new life.

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can suffer, in order that the conditions of our restoration might be satisfied, and the one and the same Mediator between God and men, the man Jesus Christ, might be able to die in respect of the one and not able to die in respect of the other." But according to this statement, the deed of redemption stands in no organic relation to the uniting of the natures. The uniting takes place *in order that* the deed may be performed, but the nature of the deed does not supply the terms by means of which the uniting of the natures may be understood. The doing of the great deed does not flow directly from the uniting of the natures. What is needed in the interests of the credibility of the creed of Chalcedon is a firmer emphasis on the fact that it was no abstract perfect humanity which was united with the divine in Christ, but our human nature in its actual condition of fall and sin, a humanity therefore, which as such the divinity disqualifies. The natures need to be defined less as static and rational entities than as movements, in which the human nature is related to the divine not positively but negatively. It is in the surrender of the human to the divine that the human nature becomes a perfect human nature. The incoming of divinity means the outgoing of humanity in its empiric actuality : yet not its annulment but its new creation. What Chalcedonianism lacks is any real understanding of the Holy Spirit as the relation between the humanity and the divinity of Christ ; the Holy Spirit through Whom two different movements, that of humanity and of divinity are brought together and made to operate in and through each other, so that what from our side, the human side, is a movement towards death, is from the other side, the divine side, a movement of new life.

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Another Christological conception which has had great influence in Christian thought is that of the 'logos' or the 'Word.' The doctrine of the divine logos through whom the world was made, and who became man in Jesus Christ has had a long and complicated history with which we cannot deal here. Its strength and its weakness lie in the fact that by means of it, it was found possible to commend Christianity to the thought of the Græco-Roman world. The logos idea, it has often been pointed out, was as primal for ancient thought as is that of evolution for the thought of to-day. In that thought, it served a two-fold purpose. First it was the category used to affirm the rationality of the world. The logos was the immanent reason of the world, the inner unifying principle of nature and man. It was the supreme value of all existence, and the phenomena of existence were arranged in order of reality according to the measure in which they participated in this rational value. But in Philo and the Alexandrines it was combined with a more dynamic idea. The logos became the divine energy and self-revelation of God. The universe was the embodiment of God's rational will. Thus the idea of will which expresses transcendence is brought into the forefront as over against the immanent idea of reason. The logos¹ "represents the sum of forces which have their ground in the will of God working harmoniously together as the immanent reason of the world." The designation of the Divine Son Who became incarnate in Jesus as the logos thus served to bring Christianity into line with the cosmic process, to connect soteriology with cosmology and so to produce a Christian philosophy. The danger was lest revelation should be transformed into a philosophy working with rational and immanential conceptions. To

¹ Scott, *The Fourth Gospel*, p. 150.

this danger, the early fathers and the framers of Church dogma were by no means blind. In the main their conceptions of the logos was sharply distinguished from that of an immanent world reason or world power. They were careful to emphasize the transcendence of the logos, and to avoid the idea that the Incarnation was but the manifestation in terms of one human personality of the immanent reason of the world. This is perhaps less true of the early apologists and the Alexandrines whose concern was to show that Christianity was the true philosophy and who strove to commend Christianity to the ancient world as the gathering up, completion, and harmonisation of the truth given brokenly and in part in the philosophies of the day.

Our attitude to the logos idea will be determined according to the way we judge of it, either as a revelatory and theological concept, or as a philosophical idea and an apologetic device. From the former point of view it is of great value, from the latter its value is dubious and its effects have often been misleading. In many ways the logos idea does great service to the theology of the Incarnation. It brings out into clear relief the fact that the God of creation and the God of redemption are one, thus undermining all gnosticism. It establishes the truth that the ground plan of creation is redemption, that creation finds its crown and consummation in redemption, that as St. Paul says, the world was made for Christ and through Christ. It emphasizes the fact that the continuity between the world and God lies in God's own word and will and not in some rational or metaphysical entity uniting them both together. And yet even here some deduction must be made. The logos can only perform these services truly, when it is taken in conjunction with that other great Christian idea, that of

the Holy Spirit. For of itself, its rational and immanential connotations are too strong to enable it effectively to bring out the fact that the connection between God and the world is expressed by the word *crisis* better than by the word *continuity*. Still the *logos* idea is capable of being so stated as to set out the true meaning and significance of the Incarnation. God became man as His Word. That is to say, what we have in Christ is not the word *of* the world, but the word *to* the world, not some immanent spirit in a human saint or hero but the critical and new-creative action of divinity upon humanity. The *logos* or the Word that became incarnate in Christ, is not the immanent ground of the world, but its divine reference. It is with this connotation of idea and significance that the writer of the Fourth Gospel utilises the conception of the *logos*. It is very improbable that he was influenced to any serious extent by Philonic and Alexandrian ideas, still more improbable by any direct Platonic or Stoic influence. His aim in presenting the idea of the Incarnation to the Græco-Roman world under the category of the *logos* was critical rather than apologetic. That is to say, his purpose was to expound who and of what nature the *logos* was, in distinction to the ideas current in the thought of his day. He will present to them the true doctrine of the *logos*. He will set that doctrine over against the current conceptions of it. He does not approach the men of his time as those to whom the *logos* is known, but as those to whom He is essentially unknown. Thus he says, when the *logos* appeared, the world knew Him not, though it was made through Him (John i, 10), and the true life which was the light for men lay in Him (i, 4). Even His own, those specially chosen and providentially led for the recognition of Him did not receive Him (i, 11).

In fact man on his natural level was unable to recognise the *logos*. The perceiving of Him involved a new birth which was not human and natural, not according to the will of the flesh nor of the will of man but of God (i, 13). The writer's language may no doubt be sometimes paralleled from Philo and the expressions of contemporary thought, but the meaning attached to it is altogether new, so that in it the *logos* idea is set over against, and not in line with, its generally received connotations. The claim of the writer is that he has beheld the manifestation of the *logos* in Jesus Christ: "We beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father full of grace and truth" (i, 14, R.V.). ¹And by this he means, not that he is one of the original eye-witnesses of the historic Jesus, nor that by means of rational insight and intuition he perceived that the world-reason was expressed in Jesus, but that by means of supernatural perception and understanding following on and connected with the new birth, he had beheld the glorious reality of the Divine Word, long hidden and inaccessible to ordinary human perception, but made flesh and appearing in the world in the presence of Jesus Christ. Moreover the writer lays stress on the fact that there is only one *logos*, not many 'logoi.' The one God Whom no man has seen at any time is declared through His Son (i, 18) Who appears among men as His *logos* or Word, so that while the law is given by Moses, grace and truth (reality in the sense of revelation) came by Jesus Christ (i, 17). In fact the writer was essaying a difficult but necessary task, and one which under the circumstances of the time was peculiarly liable to misunderstanding. His concern was not, primarily at any rate, to translate the content of revelation into the thought-forms of his day,

¹ No opinion on the authorship of the *Fourth Gospel* is intended here.

not to philosophise Christianity, but to lay hold of the weapons in the philosophic armoury in order to bring philosophy itself under a fundamental criticism. For that purpose he takes the logos idea, turns it, as it were, against itself, showing its relative right but bringing it into a new relation which radically changes its significance. In the main, as we have said, the framers of the early Church dogmatic were actuated by the same purpose. But in those circles where the apologetic interest was strong, among those who were anxious for a Christian philosophy which should align itself with the best philosophical thinking of the times, there was always the danger lest the logos idea should be utilised in the interests of a liberalising tendency moving in the direction of rationalism and immanentism.

The truth is, as we have said, the logos idea needs, in order to save it from perversion, to be correlated with the idea of the Holy Spirit. And it is important to note in this connection how large a place is given to the Spirit in the Fourth Gospel. There are some critics who regard the teaching of the Spirit as being of the very heart and purpose of the gospel while others, such as Dr. E. F. Scott, regard it as mainly the result of a desire on the part of the writer to conserve the traditional belief of the Church along with his own newer and profounder interpretations.¹ The former idea would seem to be nearer to the truth, for it is difficult to believe that a conservative interest should lead to so great an emphasis, particularly as according to Dr. Scott this emphasis serves to obscure the main intention of the gospel.² The correlation of logos and Spirit is, however, definitely indicated if it is not formally worked out. This is somewhat obscured by the fact that after the Prologue, the

¹ *The Fourth Gospel*, p. 348.

² *Ibid.*, p. 320.

logos is not explicitly mentioned—though the ideas connected with it pervade the whole gospel portraiture of Christ.”³ The hiddenness and non-recognition of the logos is also stated of the Spirit; “whom the world cannot receive, for he beholdeth him not, neither knoweth him” (John xiv, 17). And just as the reception of the logos is not a natural, but a supernatural event, the act of those “born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God” (John i, 13); so also is it with the Spirit: “ye know him, for he abideth with you and shall be in you” (John xiv, 17, R.V.). Moreover the new birth is the work of the Spirit (John iii, 3-7). The Spirit is not given until Jesus is glorified (John vii, 39), and we may connect therewith the declaration concerning the logos, “we beheld his glory” (John i, 14). It has been a misfortune for the theology of the Church that this correlation of Logos and Spirit has been so meagrely worked out. Understood in its true light it prevents any approach towards identifying the Christian logos with the immanent reason of the world. It conserves the idea that the logos is only rightly understood when interpreted not as word of the world, but as word *to* the world.

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Our criticism of traditional and orthodox Christology therefore, is that it needs to be corrected and completed by transposing it into a new element. It needs to be interpreted in terms drawn from the great idea of the Holy Spirit. It is a noble creation, far superior to anything which modern liberalism would put in its place. Neither the conception of the two natures, nor that of the logos may be abandoned. They preserve interests

³ *Ibid.*, p. 155.

which are vital to the gospel message. They are not to be watered down to suit the demands of rational criticism. Rather are they to be interpreted in such a way as to bring the autonomy of reason as well as every other kind of human autonomy to a decisive criticism and judgment. The present chapter is an attempt, all too meagre when measured by the dimensions of the task, to indicate the method of this interpretation. A great perplexity but a great promise lies here for the theologians of to-day and to-morrow. The perplexity and the promise are gathered up in the great words of Paul which open up endless vistas of endeavour and endless possibilities of progress both for thought and life : " that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, becoming conformed unto his death ; if by any means I may attain unto the resurrection of the dead."

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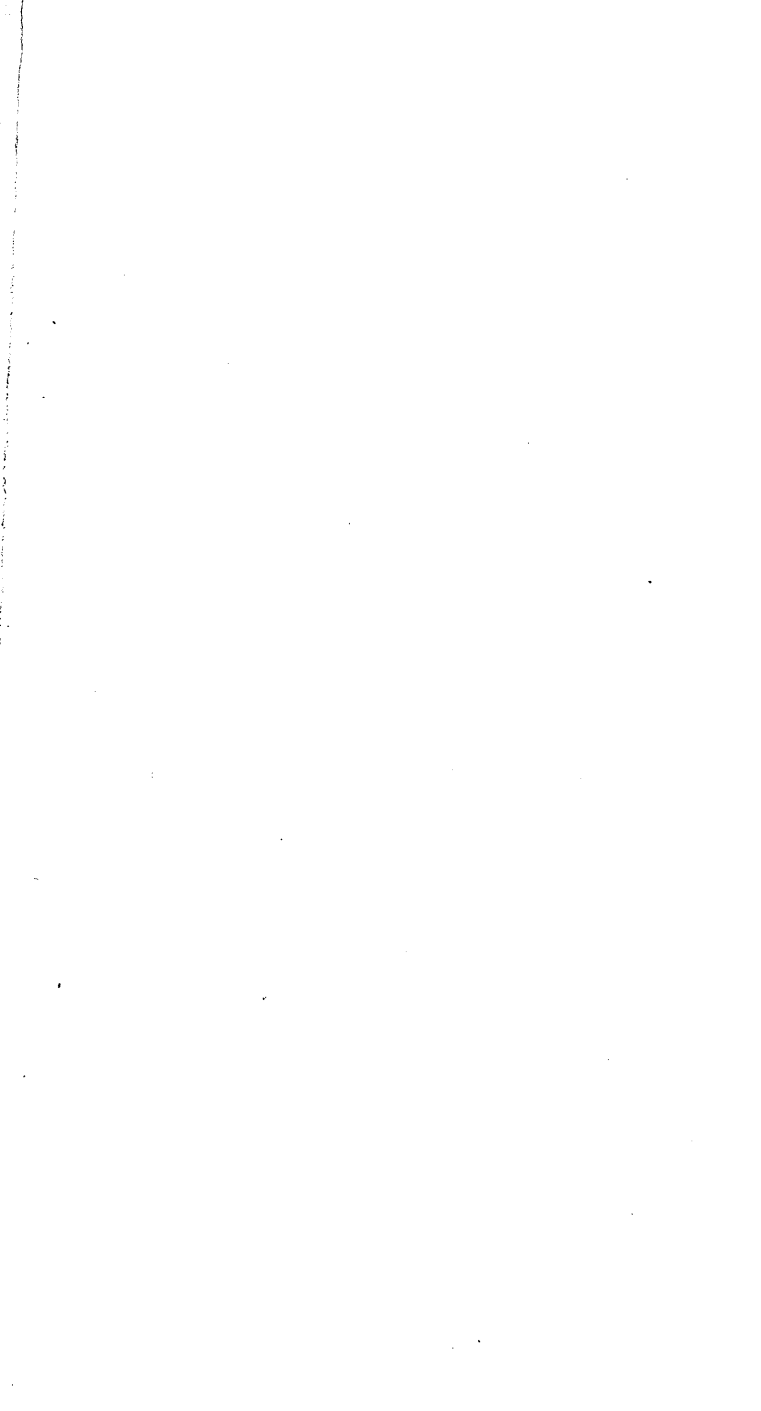
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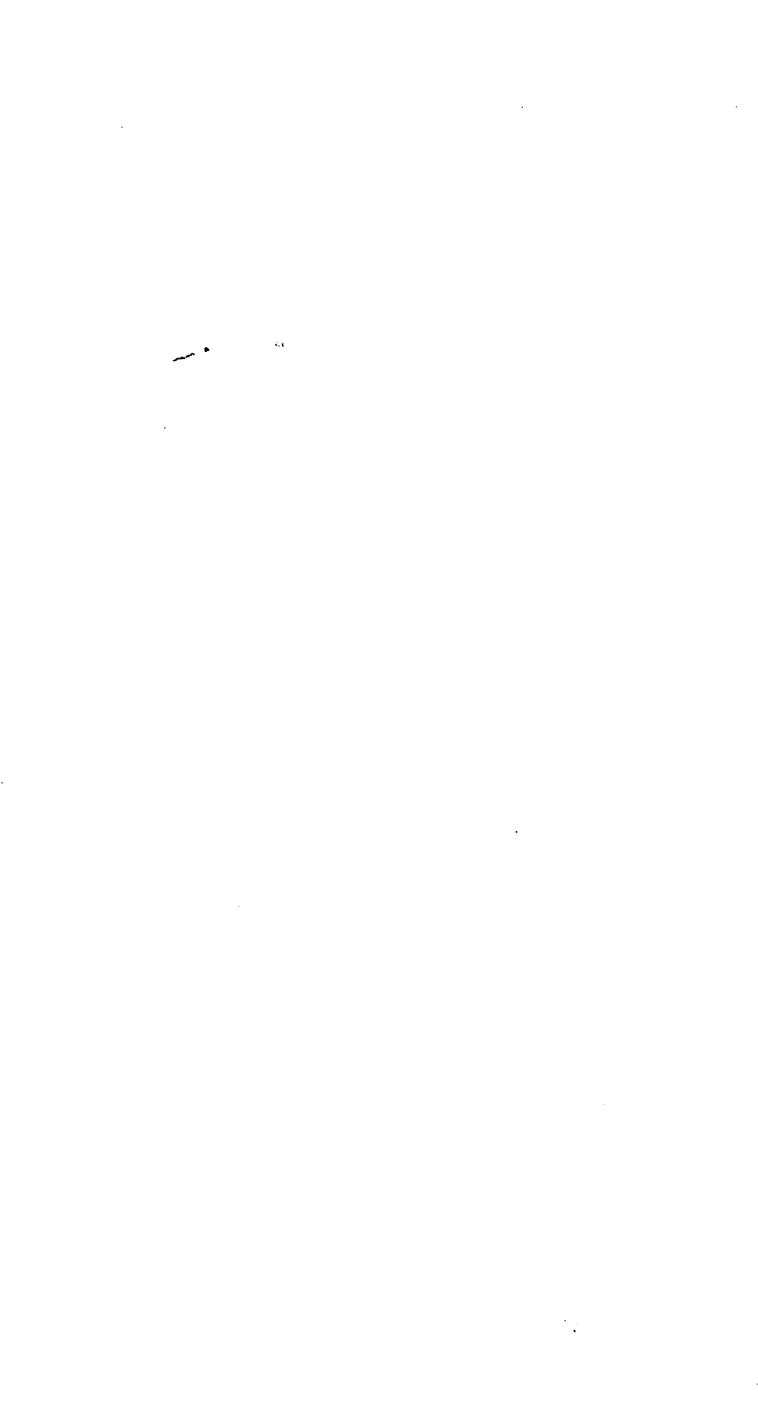
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